The chief Interest of Man;

Or, A Discourse of

RELIGION,

Clearly demonstrating

The Equity of the Precepts of the Gospel, and how much the due Observance thereof doth conduce to the happiness and well-being as well of

Humane Societies,

As of

Particular Persons.

By *H. Lukin.*

Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee what I have yet to speak on Gods behalf, *Job* 36. 2. *Dicam ego quid sentiam dicent forte meliora doctiores.* Aug. contra Faustum.

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THE PREFACE

To the Reader.

Amongſt ſo many books wherewith the World is filled, it may juſtly be expected, that none ſhould obtrude more upon it, without giving a fair account thereof, unleſs they have attained to that repute for Wiſdom which Job *had*, chap. 29. 21. *&c.* that men give ear, and wait, and keep ſilence at their counſel, waiting for it as for the rain, & opening their mouth wide as for the latter rain: *ſuch need no Apology to*

beſpeak a reception of their Labors, but it is far from me to reckon my ſelf of that number, haud equidem tali me dignor honore, *yet I muſt confeſs it is not much that I have to ſay in my own defence. The perſwaſion of Friends, from an opinion of the uſefulneſſe of ſuch Books as Men publiſh, is ſuch a common Apology, that the world grows weary of it; if I ſhould ſay that* ſcribunt indocti doctique *was an old obſervation, ſo that it is no new thing for Men of ſmall Learning to write Books, it might well be retorted that the World hath ſuffered ſo much by ſuch Mens Writings,*

that

that it is pity they ſhould ſuffer any more by them. It will be but a poor Plea to ſay that I have written but little, and ſo ſhall put Men to the expence of very little time or money for the reading of it, if the little which I have written may not probably be of ſome advantage to the World; but, this, through the bleſſing of God, I am not without hopes of, if one ſinner might hereby be converted from the error of his way, I ſhould account it an happy fruit, and abundant recompence of my well intended endeavors; but if the diſobedient may not be hereby turned to the Wiſdom of the juſt,

yet I hope the children of Wisdom will hereby be established and encouraged to hold fast their integrity, & be furnished with that, wherewith they may put to silence the ignorance of foolish Men. If the Ethiopians paint Angels black, and Devils white, because they are black themselves, & Pride themselves in it, as their beauty, this makes not us to dislike our own complexion, neither can they perswade us to wash our selves with Ink, that we may be like them. If therefore some Men glory in their shame, and account it their honour to be like the Devil, or hate holinesse, wherein

Men

Men do most resemble God, and bear his Image, as it is said of the Basilisk, *that its enmity against Man is such, that it will fly with rage upon the Picture of a Man, let not this be a temptation to us, to learn their wayes,* let them return to us, let us not return to them, Jer. 15. 19. *If our adversary should write a Book against us, (that I may allude to the words of* Job, c. 31. 35. &c.) *if it be of scorns and reproaches, let us bind it to us as a Crown, and say as* David, 2 Sam. 6. 21. I will yet be more vile, *if to obey God, and be like to him, be to be vile: but if he will encounter us in good earnest,*

with ſerious arguments, let us go near to him as a Prince, and not fear, having all the reaſons that can be drawn from the authority of our Soveraign Lord and Law-giver, from our own intereſt, from equity, ingenuity and gratitude, on our ſide.

I ſhall not be very ſollicitous or induſtrious to decline or anticipate the cenſures of others, I know it is ordinarily ſuppoſed, that Men of no name that have not that real worth which may make others take notice of them, have that petty deſign in publiſhing ſuch things as are more admired by themſelves, than by any body

elſe

else to get themſelves a name, and to make themſelves and their own ſuppoſed worth known to the World. Let Men think of me as they pleaſe; I hope there is none ſhall think more meanly of me, than I do of my ſelf, and I am ſuch an impartial judge of my own labors, that I am ſo far from proſecting thereby for any eſteem or credit in the World, that I ſhould rather if that were my aim and deſign, have held my peace, which is the way for a fool to be counted wiſe, Prov. 17. 28.

One thing I would advertiſe the Reader of, that this Treatiſe was finiſhed in another

Nation,

Nation, after some years observations, of the lives & manners of such as in other parts of the World profess Christianity, both Papists *and* Protestants, *the manner of whose conversation I was then better acquainted with, than of those of our own Nation, which I hope may suffice to free me from all suspicion of having any oblique aspect upon particular Persons, or any particular sort of men, or of calculating this Treatise only for our own Meridian, and for our own times. I know, were it in other Languages, it might indifferently serve for any place where the Gospel hath been*

Preached,

Preached, and might have had its use in the purest times, which have been since the Christian name was known: that little I have seen of the World, will easily keep me from judging our own Nation the worst of any that profess Religon, unless the priviledges which we enjoy above others, do raise our guilt to a greater height; and I am not so unacquainted with the History of former Ages, as being surprized to cry out, O tempora! O mores! *or to make that unwise enquiry,* Eccles. 7. 10. what is the cause that the former dayes were better than these? *I confess I have sometimes*

times been in Pauls *case*, Act. 17. 16. *when I have observed amongst the generality of Christians in all places, so much difference betwixt mens principles & practices, & so many professing to know God, which in works deny him, & this hath made me sometimes expres my self with the greater passion and vehemency, as knowing the terror of the Lord, and grieved to see the misery that so many without repentance are hastning to: for thongh I owe a special love to those of the household of faith, yet I profess my self a Citizen of the universe, and so have a charity and compassion towards all.* The

SECTION. I.

The Practical Atheist *a greater wonder than the* Speculative Atheist; *the unreasonableness of such as professing Religion, do yet neglect the commands thereof, and despise such as desire to be found in a strict observance of them.*

ALexander being invited to hear an Oration in commendation of *Hercules*, replyed, *Ecquis eum vituperat?* Doth any body speak against him? and some will think I might *peritiæ parcere chartæ*, or rather better imploy precious in-

revocable hours than in Apologizing for that which needs no defence, and which there is such a reverence of so deeply implanted in every Mans nature; but upon a nearer approach and exact survey of things, we shall find there is nothing in the World doth either need or deserve a more serious consideration and just defence. *The Speculative Atheist* is such a Monster that many will hardly admit of such a thing in nature. And it seems incredible to them that any should doubt of a *Deity*; yet daily experience and observation refutes our more rational and retired Speculations, and hath put many Learned Men to the labour of proving that there is a God; this being the utmost we are able in the Theory to make good; *That there are none think that there is no God, but such as for whom it were well if there were none*: and these being judicially given up to be seduced by their own lusts, first, think it would be well for them if there were no God, finding his commands

mands crossing their Carnal interests and corrupt desires; thence they proceed to wish there were no God, and by degrees arrive at flat *Atheism*, inordinate passions converting *Desire* into *Opinion* (as we easily believe that which we earnestly desire) that so having baffled their Judgments, and drawn them into the same confederacy with their Lusts, they may sin without their control or contradiction, and avoid the reproofs of their Consciences while they give up themselves freely to satisfie their vile affections. *His gradibus itur.* I affirm the *Practical Atheist* is yet a greater wonder, and a more horrid Monster than the *Speculative Atheist.* (As *Mirandula* hath well observed) *it is a wonder that any should doubt of the truth of the Gospel after so many evident proofs of it; but a greater wonder that any should believe it, and yet live as if it were not true.* But *Affrica* hath not so many monsters in nature as *Europe* hath in *Religion.* How many thousands of Zealots have we that professe the

name of Christ, and presume violently that they shall be saved by him, yet look into their conversations and you would not believe their own mouths, or imagine that they are seriously perswaded that there is a God, an Heaven, an Hell, a Judgment to come wherein they shall be sentenced to their everlasting home.

Nay, hear O Heavens and be astonished, O Earth, hath any people dealt so with their Gods, which are yet no Gods, as Christians deal with Christ? Do Turks deal so with their *Mahomet*? Do they scorn those that are most careful to observe the Rules of his *Alcoran*? Are they ashamed to be seen to have any respect to his Laws? Yet I call Heaven and Earth to record against Christians, that *he that turns from his wickedness, makes himself a prey*, yea, as *Salvian* complained of old, *Mali esse coguntur ne viles habeantur.* Men are fain to turn Rebels against Christ and cast off the fear of his commands to free themselves

ſelves from the ſcorn and hatred of Chriſtians, amongſt whom he muſt go for a Melancholick dull ſot, or ſneaking fool, and one that hath nothing of generoſity that dare not ſet his mouth againſt Heaven, or defie the authority of his Maker; inſomuch that he that cannot harden himſelf againſt ſcorn, ſhall be jeared out of Heaven; he ſhall forfeit the reputation of his breeding, that ſhall ſpeak a word of the Scriptures; he ſhall paſſe for a ſilly fellow that will abandon the pleaſures of Sin in hopes of an unſeen-Glory, and he ſhall be accounted importunate or uncivil that ſhall interrupt Mens carnal mirth by caſting in the ingrateful mention of God or his commands, and be thought unfit for the company of Perſons of quality and breeding. Of old they accounted it the ſum and ſubſtance of Religion *to imitate him whom they worſhipped.* Thoſe that adored mortal Deities (ſuch as *Alexander* and *Cæſar*) were ambitious to imitate their *Vertues*, yea,

ſome Emperors have been imitated by their flattering Courtiers in their *Defects* and *Deformities*. The holineſſe of God is his Glory, and (of all his attributes) propounded to us for our imitation, ſee 1 *Pet.* 1.15. *Exod.* 15.17. and compare *Iſa.*16.3. with *John* 12.40. and yet how do men *glory* in their *ſhame*, while they are *aſhamed* of their *glory*? *Phil.* 3.29. *Jer.* 2.36. but that ſome are wiſer than to be ſo befooled out of Heaven, holyneſſe would be hiſſed out of the World.

How many think it a greater reproach to call one a Saint than a Drunkard, a Whoremonger or whatever is evil, When the Scripture makes this a title of honor, and that from whence they are ſo denominated abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation? O let not theſe things be told in *Gath*, or publiſhed in *Aſhkelon*. Let not Turks and Heathens hear ſuch things of Chriſtians. What God do we worſhip? What Saviour do we own? Are they like the Idols of

of the Heathens who (as *Tertullian* ſaid of old) *are worſhipped in vain, and may be abuſed at our pleaſure?* Quit your ſelves like Men, awake your reaſon and conſider what I ſhall ſay for God and for his holy Laws, which are (as the Apoſtle ſaith, not only *holy* but *juſt* and *good*, *Rom.* 7. 12. So that (as hath been well obſerved by Learned Men) if God had never commanded what he hath done, nor made any tranſcript of the Eternal Law out of the *Idea* of his holy nature; yet, what he hath commanded would have been beſt for Mankind to obſerve. There is not only an *equity* in them, but they are good *naturally*, as well as *morally*, conducing to the welfare of Mankind, the good of the Univerſe, inſomuch that if we had ſtood on even ground with our Maker, and capitulated with him on what terms we would ſubmit our ſelves to him, and what Laws we would be obliged to obſerve, we could not have made conditions more for our own advantage: or if Chriſt

ſhould wave his authority which he hath over us, to *command* us (though the authority of the ſuperior is more to be regarded than the advantage of the inferior) he might juſtly *counſel* us, as *Rev.* 3. 18. to obſerve his precepts as that which would be beſt for our ſelves; and if we had no reſpect to his ſoveraignty, yet regard to our own welfare and happineſſe might oblige us thereto. And having evinced the *equity* of the wayes of God, and the benefit Men have thereby, I ſhall endeavour to diſcover and remove the cauſes of this *Practical Atheiſm* that reigns ſo much in the World, and though I know after all I can ſay the Diſeaſe will deſpiſe any remedy, yet let me tell all the prophane ſcorners of Godlineſſe till they can deprive themſelves of reaſon, that is, become beaſts, God and his Saints ſhall have a witneſſe in their breaſts againſt their own ſouls.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The equity of Gods commands: Love (which is the fulfilling of the Law) founded on Gods goodneſs, Patience, Bounty. Fear (which with that obſervance that is the effect of it, is the whole Duty of Man) founded on his Power and Wiſdom: ratio rei, *or reaſon it ſelf the ground of ſuch things as are of natural right: Gods ſoveraignty the ground of ſuch things as are of poſitive right.*

I Shall begin with the *Equity* of Gods commands, and ſhew how reaſonably he requires the obſervance of them, his nature moſt juſtly challenging, and the excellency of his attributes really meriting whatſoever his Law exacts as our duty. Man hath (as the *Mo-*

naliſts obſerve) but a *Political* Dominion over his affections, not ſuch a *deſpotical* and abſolute power as over his locomotive faculty, and ſo over his outward actions, ſo that he cannot love and hate, and fear, and deſire as he liſt. The Soul being a rational Agent, moveth it ſelf in reſpect of all Objects according to what it ſees there of *good* or *evil* which begets *liking* or *averſion*. Wherefore *arrogancy* is one of the moſt contemptible vanities amongſt the Sons of men, it being the moſt ridiculous thing in the World for men to require of others that Honour, eſteem, reverence, which they have no real worth in themſelves to be a foundation of. And it is worſe tyranny than that of the *Egyptian task-Maſters* who required brick without giving ſtraw. They ſay indeed *honor eſt in honorante* depending on the will of the giver, yet it muſt be *radically* in him that is honoured, there muſt be a Foundation laid by him, whereon others muſt raiſe their eſteem of him. Wherefore

fore the charge is given to *Timothy* and *Titus*, *that none should despise them*, that is, they were to carry themselves with that gravity, prudence, integrity, that none might have occasion to think meanly and contemptibly of them. Now there is in God a real foundation for all those affections, which he requires of us as the principles of all our outward actions, whereby they are formed and fashioned. First, God requires that we should *love* him with all our might, with all our strength, with our whole Soul, and this is in effect *the keeping of his commands*, *the fulfilling of his Law*, *Love* being the *Queen-regent*, the commanding affection of the Soul, the first mover that sets all on work (as *Austin* saith) *Love is the byass which turns us where ever we go?* We may judge of the power of this affection by observing the effects of it in our selves where we do truly *love*, how careful are we to *please*? how fearful to *offend*? how desirous to *enjoy*? how ambitious to *serve*? how unwearyed.

ed in *serving*? how ready to run *hazards*, to undergo difficulties? what sympathy is there of all affections? what jealousie? So that God needs require no more of us, for if he have our *Love*, the rest will follow. Now it were not beseeming the Majesty of God to require this of us, were there not that in his nature, and in his works that did justly deserve it, but there is nothing in the creature attractive of our Love which is not eminently in him, *how great is his goodness! how great is his beauty*? Zach. 9. 17. that is, those perfections of his nature, which being found in the Creature infinitely below what they are in him, make it amiable to us.

Goodness and *greatnesse* where they meet in *Man* are very *desirable* and *lovely*, but *God* is *Optimus Maximus* (as he is wont to be called) *the greatest* and *the best*, not exceeding us more in his *greatnesse* than in his *goodnesse*, in his *Glory* than in his *Grace*. *Mich.* 7. 18. What narrow bounds did *Peter* set to his forbearance when he asked

if

if he ſhould forgive his brother ſeven times? what would ſoon become of us if the forbearance of God were confined within ſuch narrow limits? we indeed paſs by many offences in others becauſe we know not how to revenge them, but God could every moment by a word of his mouth, an act of his will let us know what it is to contemn his authority. And let us but conſider the diſproportion between God and Man, how infinitely he is above him, and the nature of God, how holy and contrary to whatſoever is evil, and we ſhall much more admire his patience and goodneſſe. We can do good to our *Friends*, we who are evil, but to do good to *Enemies* whom we have daily in our power, and who ſtill continue their enmity againſt us is too hard for us. God is *good* to *Angels* that never ſinned, *patient* only to *ſinners*. Let us but recount the various acts of his Providence towards us, conſider the daily care which he hath of us, the mercies which we daily re-

receive from him, the evil he preſerveth us from, what offers he makes to us of an eternal Glory with himſelf, what means he affords for obtaining it, how long ſpace of repentance he gives us, and we ſhall find our obligations to him to be infinitely beyond what they are to *Parents*, *Princes*, *Friends*, diſloyalty and ingratitude to whom is condemned, abhorred of all. Further *the Fear of God is the whole Duty of Man. Eccl.* 12. 13. that is, *efficienter* though not *formaliter*, for where ever it is it doth bind the Soul to its duty. *Job.* 28. 28. *Prov.* 1. 7. and I may ſay as much for this as for the Love of God. Methinks it is a condeſcenſion in him to argue the matter as he doth with ſinners. *Jer.* 5. 22. *Mat.* 10. 28. when he might let them run upon their own ruine, and know by experience the danger that they deſpiſe. We ſhould deride the threatnings of ſome vain boaſter that ſhould go about to affright us with ſuch things as it were far above his power to effect,

fect, but the frown of a *Cæsar*, an *Alexander* might make us tremble; it is the most astonishing madnesse and folly in the World for men to account it generosity & braveness of spirit, not to be awed by the great words of Scripture, to dare to sin, to take courage against God like the *Philistins*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 9. and to account it meanness of spirit to be affrighted with the threatnings of an invisible God, whose greatnesse we neither see nor feel, though it is our own fault; we seeing it in its effects every day. It is he that hangs the *Earth* on nothing, and when he pleaseth, makes it tremble, sends the *Sun* on his errand every day, orders the host of Heaven, making every Star keep its place, thundring with his voice so as he can make the Emperors of the World run to hide themselves, setting bounds to the raging waves of the Sea which they dare not passe; and though he doth not every day reveal his wrath from Heaven against sinners, yet he hath told us it is not because he approves

proves of their ways, or knows not how to right himself, he only stays till the time of the *Revelation* of his righteous judgment, and then he will pour out his wrath like fire and make the stoutest sinners run, (if it were possible for them) under the Rocks and Mountains to hide themselves from his presence. *David* and *Solomon* were both feared for their *Wisdom*; and indeed *Wisdom doth make a Mans face to shine*, commanding reverence and a kind of veneration from others. Now there is none to be compared to God for Wisdom, he is so wise he cannot be deceived, cannot be mocked, he sees through the most secret designs of Men, and laughs them to scorn, takes the wise in their own craftinesse, makes those that dare transgresse his *precepts*, whether they will or no, to fulfil his *purpose*, over-reaching them in their most cunning contrivances, making them serve his holy ends when they least intend it. Further, he requires that we should

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acknowledge him in all our wayes, owning him as our *Soveraign* in the obſervance of his *precepts*, as our *Preſerver* in depending on his *providence*. And what more juſt and equal, when we had our being from him, when we *live* and *move* in him, when we are daily maintained at his coſt and charges, and are therefore ſent to the *Ox* and the *Aſs* to learn our duty; it being he that gives us all things richly to enjoy, and hath not only *right* and authority to *command* us, but *might* and power to *force* us? ſo that if we will do any thing without his leave or *moral* permiſſion, we cannot do it without his *natural* permiſſion. If we run away from his ſervice, he can command the Sea to way-lay us (as in the caſe of *Jonah*) and ſend a Whale to fetch us back. If we would go out of the reach of his Rod, he can make it reach us where ever we go, as the *Iſraelites* in their going to *Egypt*, *Jer.* 42.16. In ſhort, he commands the boiſterous Winds, the unruly Waves, the Angels that excel in might and glory,

glory, the Devils that are filled with rage and envy, the Sun, that as a Gyant runs his race, and makes it ſtand ſtill at his pleaſure, the Stars whom he makes as his Hoſt to fight his battels; the frogs, the Flies, the Lice, the Bears, the Lions, the Ravens, as the ſeveral inſtances in holy Scripture ſhew. All theſe are at his beck, and he ſends them at his pleaſure. Degenerate Man only, (for whom he hath done more than for any of the works of his hands, and whom he hath made capable of more happineſſe than the whole viſible Creation) caſts off the authority of his Creator in thoſe things wherein eſpecially it would be his *Wiſdom* to make a *vertue* of *neceſſity*; for when Men will venture upon any thing without asking Gods leave, or taking his counſel, he ſtands by and derides their counſels, and tells them that he is wiſe alſo, and will bring evil upon them, and not call back his word, what he ſaith ſhall be done, none ſhall diſanul it; when their deſigns which they would

would undertake without him ſhall come to nothing, and they periſh in them. *Eſa.* 31. 2. thus God will ſooner or later teach all what it is to deſpiſe his authority or to diſpute his commands. As for our outward actions (what I have already ſaid concerning our internal affections, and thoſe acts and attributes of God whereon they are grounded, being ſuppoſed) though they ſhould not be of any natural right, or have any intrinſick goodneſſe in them, antecedently to any command of God concerning them, (which yet doubtleſſe ſome have, and are therefore commanded, becauſe good, as thoſe which are grounded on the precepts of the Law of Nature) yet as we ſay of the *credenda*, or the things which we are to believe, though our finite underſtandings be not able to comprehend the nature and cauſes of ſome of them, yet we have reaſon enough to believe them, becauſe they are ſpoken by him that cannot lye; ſo I may ſay of the *agenda*.

da of Religion, though they should not be of *natural moral right* (which yet many of them are) yet being commanded by him who is so wise and so good, to whom we have such obligations lying upon us, and on whom we have such an absolute dependance we have, all the reason in the World to do them without murmuring or disputing, and though the soveraignty of God is such that he might justly try our obedience, and make us know our subjection to him, by requiring of us such things as are meerly of *positive right*, yet it is evident that in what he hath required, he hath not stood much upon his *Soveraignty* and *Authority*, but hath commanded such things as he might justifie at an impartial Bar, though man were an Independant Creature, and co-ordinate with him, and this will sufficiently appear by the ensuing discourse.

SECT.

SECT. III.

The advantage which Men have by Religion in respect of their good name, honour being both a moral and a natural effect of vertue and holinesse. The Hypocrisie of some that professe Christianity, an argument of the excellency of it. Shame the present reward of sin. None dare speak against holiness or holy men as such.

WHat I have hitherto said hath been *ab æquo*, I shall now argue *ab utili*, and shew what advantages come to Mankind by a due observance of the *Rules* of the Gospel, whereby the truth of the Apostles assertion will evidently appear, that *Godlinesse is profitable to all things*, and is the chief interest of the World.

And first, let me consider man in his

his *personal capacity*, and his several interests in such a respect, and I will begin with that which is most *extrinsick* to him, *viz.* his *good name* which *Solomon* justly saith is *rather to be chosen than great riches*, and he adds a reason of it, *loving favour is better than Silver or Gold.* That is the effect of it, it commands a friendly respect from all, and so entertains him where ever he goes, is his *harbinger* to bespeak him in all places an honourable reception, it is his *surety*, to vouch him in all his dealings with others, so that there is nothing can more sweeten a Mans life to him, and indeed nothing which generous spirits do more esteem. No greater incentive to vertue among the Heathens than honour, and it is ordinarily seen that Men can more easily bear the losse of Goods than disgrace or contempt, a breach in their Estate, than a wound in their name. Now I will not here speak of that honour, which after a few days shall be put upon all Godly men when they shall appear with Christ in

in Glory, and ſhine like the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, while others ſhall be cloathed with perpetual ſhame: Nor will I ſpeak of honour as it is a *moral* effect of Godlineſſe, God having promiſed *to honour thoſe that honour him*, and he that gave the *Iſraelites* favour in the eyes of the *Egyptians*, and *made them to be pityed of them that carryed them away captive*, can give a Man eſteem and repute among others.

But I ſhall ſpeak chiefly of *honour* as it is a *natural* effect of Godlineſs, and it is worthy to be conſidered that that which at firſt view ſeems to reflect diſ-honourably upon Religion, and which many improve to the reproach of the profeſſors of it, doth upon a ſerious weighing of the whole matter exceedingly commend it, and argue ſomething of more than ordinary worth in it, and that is the *Hypocriſie* which is found among *Chriſtians*: this implies that there is ſomething in it which is attractive that men ſhould uſe ſuch induſtry

dustry to counterfeit it, and seek by a feigned shew of it to insinuate themselves into the esteem of others whose good opinion they think most considerable. However, as I have already said (and shall say again in due place) there are many scorn men for it, yet this is an evident proof that it is a thing of good report and praiseworthy; though we do not esteem every thing that looks like Gold, because it is sometimes counterfeited, yet this is an argument of the worth of that which is Gold indeed: so, though 'tis true every one that makes profession of Godlinesse doth not presently deserve the honour and respect of a Godly Man, because there are many Hypocrites; yet it is an argument of the greater worth of such as are Godly indeed. Pearls and Diamonds are oftener counterfeited than those things that are of mean value. What is there that begets an higher esteem amongst Men than that *Humility*, *Meekness*, *Goodnesse*, *Charity*, *Justice*, which

which the Gospel requires, and which every true Christian in some measure hath? It makes a Man (as was said of *Vespasian*) the *Darling of Mankind*, and makes his memory blessed. What is the ordinary Character which you shall hear of such a Man? He was a good Man, a quiet Man, you might have put your Life in his hand, his word was as good as his bond; and however the Devil cheats men with the hopes of esteem in the World by a careless neglect of Religion, though they gratifie the greatest part of the World (in some respect) as they justifie their wicked wayes by their own practice; yet we shall observe (through the just judgment of God) *shame* is the *present* wages of sin. *Prov.* 13. 5. *Rom.* 6. 21. and indeed the *Heathens* themselves made *honour* the reward of *vertue*, so that a wicked Man according to them is not capable of it. *Pride* is that which all abhor, *swearing* and *blaspheming* are such sins as none gain by, and therefore will commend no man;

for, *Drunkenneſſe* diſcovers ſo much of a Mans weakneſſe, that it makes him obnoxious to every Mans pity or ſcorn; *lying*, *injuſtice*, *oppreſſion*, and other ſins againſt the *ſecond table*, being immediatly againſt our Neighbour, and ſo prejudicial to the intereſt of Mankind, cannot purchaſe any man any honour or eſteem; and though it is true, as I have before complained, that a Godly man is expoſed to ſcorn and reproach; yet, *firſt*, it is of ſuch whoſe reproaches we may glory in, and bind to us as a Crown. What was ſaid of *Nero*, is true of them, that it is likely to be ſomething that is good which they ſpeak againſt; yea, commonly ſuch before they dye, juſtifie thoſe whom they reproached, and when they grow wiſer come to be of their mind, when they come to lye on their ſick beds, and to be convinced by ſenſe and experience of what they would not believe, or at leaſt conſider before, that there is a *vanity in every Creature, that they muſt dye, and that their former*

plea-

pleaſures will yield them no comfort at ſuch an hour: then they reproach themſelves more than formerly they reproached others, then they find that they were the fools for deſpiſing inſtruction, and wiſh now they were in the caſe of thoſe whom they deſpiſed; and which is yet more obſervable, Godlineſs doth command ſuch an eſteem from all, that none dare ſpeak againſt it, and you ſhall hardly hear any Godlyman reproached as ſuch as the *Jews* would not own that they ſtoned Chriſt for a *good work*, but for *Blaſphemy*; when Wicked Men reproach others, they will not by any means acknowledge that it is for *Godlineſſe*, but for *Ungodlineſſe*, for Hypocriſie, for being too nice and ſuperſtitious, doing more than God requires, for Covetouſneſſe, or ſuch like ſins; ſo that by their own confeſſion, ſincerity, obſerving what God hath commanded, charity, *&c.* are good and commendable, and ſo they are condemned out of their own mouths. Let ſin ſeek excuſes

and ſubterfuges. *Vertue (as truth) ſeeks no corners, knows no ſhame.*

SECT. IV.

How much Godlineſſe conduceth to the preſerving and increaſe of Mens Eſtates, which Sin doth like a Canker, waſt and conſume. An illuſtration of Jer. 17. 11. *and* Hoſ. 9. 11. *Objections anſwered, which Men make from that Juſtice and Charity which Religion obliges Men to, and from thoſe expenſes and loſſes which it expoſes them to, as alſo from experience and daily obſervation.*

THe next intereſt of Man in his perſonal capacity which I ſhall conſider, is the furniture of this life for bearing his charges in his

his Pilgrimage while he is on his way towards his long home, and though *Riches* (by reaſon of the abuſe of them) ſometimes ſeem to be undervalued both by God and Man, in the Scripture and other writings, yet in themſelves they are uſeful and deſirable, and if we ſhould underſtand theſe things *abſolutely* and *ſimply*, which are ſpoken of them, not in a *certain reſpect* and *ſecundum quid* (as they ſpeak) it might rather be ſaid, the curſe of the Lord makes rich than his bleſſing; thereby a Man is capable of doing good to others, and our Saviour hath pronounced it more bleſſed to give than to receive, he is able to command his own affairs, he is freed from the temptations of poverty to a ſinful flattery and pleaſing of Men, incroaching upon Gods time or Mens Eſtates, from diſtracting cares about the neceſſaries of this life, they are a defence to him, not only in his own conceit, but really lifting him up, that the foot of contempt may not trample upon

him, and that whatever is praiſe-worthy in him may be more conſpicuous to others which is little taken notice of in the poor, whoſe wiſdom, yea, all other graces and vertues are deſpiſed. Now as *the race is not to the ſwift, nor the battel to the ſtrong*, ſo neither are Riches alwayes to the diligent, or induſtrious, or wiſe, but to thoſe whom God favours with his bleſſing. *Godlineſſe hath the promiſe both of this life, and that to come*, though God hath not abſolutely promiſed abundance or ſuperfluities, neceſſaries he hath; ſo that though *the Lions* (whereby we may according to the language of Scripture, underſtand thoſe who have both cruelty and power to oppreſſe others) *may lack, and ſuffer hunger, thoſe that fear the Lord ſhall want no good thing.* Again, Godlineſſe may be ranked amongſt the *natural* cauſes as well as amongſt the *moral* cauſes of *riches.* Do but conſider what diligence the Goſpel requires in our particular callings, and though (according

ding to what I lately ſaid) this is not the only or ſolitary cauſe of *Riches*, yet it is a means which God doth ordinarily bleſſe. Do but further conſider what ſobriety and moderation is required in Meat, Drink, Apparel, and we ſhall eaſily conceive how much it doth tend to the increaſe of Mens ſubſtance, and ſtopping up thoſe chinks and crannies, at which other Mens Eſtates do run out. On the other hand we ſhall find many ſins both *moral* and *naturæl* cauſes of decays in mens Eſtates, it is true all ſin doth make men obnoxious to the curſe: but there are many ſins which derive a curſe upon Men, which in a ſpecial manner (like the ruſt) devours their Riches; particularly *oppreſſion* and *injuſtice*, the *Prophet Jer.* 17. 11. elegantly ſhews how the deſigns of Men, for ſetting up themſelves thereby prove abortive, *as the Partridge ſitteth upon eggs and hatcheth them not, ſo he that getteth Riches and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his dayes, and in the end ſhall be a fool.*

Some Birds Men take care of to secure them againſt injuries and violence as thoſe that are tame, others there are whoſe uſeleſſeneſs makes them neglected of all and ſo is their ſecurity, others there are able to reſiſt the violence of the Birds of prey; the Partridge is none of theſe, and ſo is moſt likely of all others to miſcarry and prove a prey to violence: ſo the unjuſt Oppreſſor may indeed gather Riches, but he ſhall ſoon leave them, *himſelf* is like the *Graſſe*, but his *Glory* is like the *Flower* of the Graſs (which oft falls off while the ſtalk ſtands) and he ſhall outlive his Glory, ſome Mens Glory flies away from the *conception*, others from the *womb*, others from the *birth*, *Hoſ.* 9. 11. ſome mens deſigns fail while they are projecting and contriving them, others while they are travelling with them, or labouring to effect them, *they fade in their wayes*, others when they have juſt attained them, and arrived at their end, as the Rich Man, but when he ſhould ſolace himſelf

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in the enjoyment of them, they shall be taken away like the Corn, and the wine in the Harvest or vintage, and in his end he shall be a fool, that is according to the language of the Scripture (wherein words of existence are put sometimes only for appearance and manifestation) he shall appear to be a fool, though formerly he seemed to be of the wise of the World, that knew how to get most for himself in the scuffle of the World, wherein almost every one scrambles to get as much as he can to himself to make his own heap biggest, but increasing that *which is not his own*, *Hab.* 2.6. but of right belongs to others, he proves like the Dog in the fable, that not content with what he had, but catching at more lost all. So Adultery (through the curse of God) is a devouring Fire that consumes and wasts a Mans substance. So the Covetous unmerciful Man unfolds that riddle. *Prov.* 11.24. he *scatters by gathering* whiles he retains his Riches when God requires them for

for the relief of the poor, or by his extortion and oppreſſion ſqueezeth out the ſweat, yea, it may be the blood of the poor: what is ſo either gotten or kept proves a canker to his Eſtate to devour it. Yea, there are many ſins, which are the natural cauſes of poverty, and if God ſhould leave men only to the genuine natural effects of their ſins, they would ſoon *fade in their wayes*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Jam.* 1. 11. *By means of a whoriſh Woman a Man is brought to a morſel of Bread*, her words are ſo enſnaring, he is loſt that is once entangled with them, and it is a ſad ſign ſuch a one is abandoned of God. So the unmerciful Man and the Oppreſſor expoſeth himſelf to the curſes of the poor, yea, to their rage and violence if ever they have the opportunity of a popular tumult. So how doth Pride (like ruſt) eat up Mens Silver and God. *Drowſineſs cloaths a Man with rags*, ſo Gluttony and Drunkenneſſe feed upon Mens Eſtates till they have devoured them. Envy and malice be-

beget contentions and quarrels which cast Men into chargeable Law-suits. If Men would in their Books of Accounts allow some pages for their Lusts, and set down what they spend on them more than what *Nature*, *Reason*, *Religion* require, and write so much laid out at such a time for *Pride*, so much at another time for *Pleasure* and Voluptuousnesse, so much for *envy* in a Law-suit to vex such a one, so much for entertainments, Buildings, Gardens, Festivals, Pomp of Funerals, (I speak not against a *decorum* and moderation in such things answerable to a Mans rank and Estate, but only against the superfluity and excesse in these things, which Mens own Consciences will tell them, ambition and vain glory put them upon) let them set down so much *lucrum cessans* from idleneſse and negligence in their particular callings, and they shall find such a retinue of Lusts (which Religion would make them shake off and abandon) as chargeable as a train of Ser-

Servants, though the old complaint should be true. *Quot servi, tot Fures.* Notwithstanding all that I have said, many have such a prejudice against Religion, that they think if a Man begin seriously to addict himself thereto, it soon spoils his thriving in the World. As *first*, it is observed by many that it takes up much of Mens time, and many as soon as they begin to be so strict in matters of Religion, neglect their particular callings. To this I answer, God is but little beholding to men that complain that his service takes up too much of their time, there are none in the World amongst the devout orders that consecrate their time more entirely to God than thousands do to the Devil and to their own lusts; yea, how few are there that do not allow more time to Pride in adorning themselves? to pleasure in vain sports and recreations? to idle discourse? to fruitless visits? to superfluous sleep & ease than God requires to be spent solely in his ser-

ſervice? he allows us time enough for our private affairs and particular callings. God is not ſerved only in prayer and reading, and hearing his word, but in the works of our ordinary callings. *Col.*3. 13. What is there ſaid of ſervants is true of others alſo in their ſeveral ſtations, while they duely attend their lawful vocations. It is true, ſome Chriſtians may not have prudence to ſhare their time equally betwixt their *general* and *particular* callings, but ſuch are ordinarily obſerved to be young Converts, (as they are called) that is, ſuch as have had but late acquaintance with the power and practice of Godlineſſe, and ſomething is to be indulged to theſe who at firſt converſion many times find ſo much delight and ſweetneſſe in exerciſes of Religion, that they know not how to leave them off. We know under the Law he that had marryed a Wife was diſpenſed with the firſt year to ſtay at home and ſolace himſelf with her and not forced to go out to War. Some

again,

again are ready to complain of the charge of Charity which Religion doth oblige a Man to. To such I answer, nature it self doth bind a Man to the same charity, that Christianity binds him to, only Christianity directing us to right principles and ends in such actions, makes them turn to our good account. So that *Christian Charity* is the best *Usury*, God gives us bond for repayment. *Prov.* 19. 17. and he is a good pay-master. If a Man would lay up somewhat against an evil day, he cannot put it into better hands. *Eccles.* 11. 2. If the worst come, and the hand of violence should seize on his Estate, yet he may say with him in *Seneca*, *I have that still which I have given away*, yea, a Man of meer humanity and generosity, cannot but have such a sympathy with others in their sufferings, that in relieving them, he relieves himself, as *Alexander* when *Darius* sent a complement to him by his Ambassadors for his civility to his Wife, Mother, Daughters, whom he had taken

taken Captives, returned him answer, that *it was in vain to complement with an Enemy, and the favour he had shewed to them was not so much out of affection to him, as to satisfie his own nature, which could not insult over the misery of others.* For the charge of the service of God, let shame for ever cloath them, and confusion cover them as a Garment that complain of it. Let an Heathen, an *Alexander* condemn them, who when *Leonidas* reproved him for spending so much incense in sacrifice to his Gods, and told him he might do that when he had taken the Countries from whence it came, having taken them, sent him incense in abundance, and sent him word, that *for the future he should not be sparing in his offerings to his Gods, for he had found by experience that what was offered to them they paid with Usury.* And further, our expence now under the Gospel about the service of God, is nothing to what it was formerly under the Law. What I said before in respect

of

of time, I may ſay here in reſpect of Eſtate, what Men ſpend upon Religious uſes and works of charity, is not comparable to what Men ſpend upon their Luſts. And whoever call themſelves Chriſtians ſhould diſdain that any ſhould be more free in the ſervice of the Devil, than they are in the ſervice of Chriſt. Neither is it Chriſtian charity but blind zeal and ſuperſtition that makes men give away their Eſtates (as is ordinary amongſt the Papiſts) to maintain others in eaſe and idleneſſe under a pretence of devoting themſelves to religious exerciſes, and the imitation of I know not what pretended Saints. Others are not aſhamed to complain of that juſtice and equity, that Religion doth oblige a man to obſerve in his commerce with others, as hindering their thriving in the World: but I have ſaid enough already of the curſe that follows injuſtice and oppreſſion, to ſhew how vain this objection is, beſides the puniſhment inflicted by Man for theſe ſins,

which

which are the more odious to Men becauſe they are againſt our neighbor immediately (as many other ſins are not) ſo as men are more ſenſible of them, and as much as they can avoid having any thing to do with ſuch as are falſe and unjuſt in their dealings with others. Some object further the ſufferings which Religion expoſeth a Man oftentimes to. But to this I may anſwer, as to the former, Men ordinarily ſuffer more for ſin. The *Devil* hath had more *Martyrs* than *Chriſt* in moſt Ages of the World; that is, more have ſuffered for doing the Devils works, and fulfilling his Luſts, than for the ſervice of Chriſt. How many are there that ſuffer impriſonment, baniſhment, loſſe of goods, yea, of life for injuſtice, oppreſſion, murther, adultery, ſedition, and other ſins. And I have oft thought it might be a great comfort to one impriſoned for the cauſe of Religion, for Chriſts ſake, to think he might have ſuffered the ſame for his *ſin*, if he had been left to his

luſts.

Lusts as others; or for his *misery*, for Debt and Poverty, whereas now he suffers the ordinary lot of Mankind, in such a cause, on such an occasion, as it shall prove his greatest advantage, God rewarding so bountifully, whatever a Man undergoes for his sake, both with present spiritual comforts, and future everlasting Glory. Lastly, experience may be objected against all that I have said, it being observed that the followers of Christ have the least share ordinarily in the things of the World.

But I answer to this, it is not because Religion is any way prejudicial to Mens worldly Estates, but because God in his free and wise Providence doth for the most part choose the poor of the World to be the Heirs of his Kingdom, both that he may confound the wisdom of Men, and stain the Pride of their glory, choosing contrary to Mans ordinary judgment and choice, and also because out of his bounty he is pleased to give many a portion in *this Life*, to whom

whom he intends none hereafter. Further, however God doth not many times give his Children superfluities, he ordinarily provides for their necessities, and many may make *Davids* observation, *that they have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.* Yea, I may add, as *Psal.* 37. 16. *A little that a righteous Man hath, is better than great Treasures of many wicked,* because he is satisfied with what he hath.

The vanity of the Creature proceeds from the vanity of Mens minds, when Men will make the Creature their chief happiness, they must needs find it vanity and vexation of spirit, because it doth not answer their expectations from it, they looking for more from it than ever God put in it. But a Godly Man having something else for his chief good, which is sufficient to fill his most enlarged desires, and to answer the highest expectations that he can have from it, he makes use of the Creature only for the end,

to

to which God hath appointed it, to ſupply his bodily neceſſities, to be a *Viaticum* in this his Pilgrimage towards Heaven, which end it is ſufficient to anſwer, ſo that there is none can rejoyce and take pleaſure in the Creature more than a Godly Man.

SECT.

SECT. V.

The influence which Religion hath even upon our bodies, how far it conduceth to our health. Diſeaſes of the body ordinarily proceed from the diſtempers of the Soul. That Temperance, Diligence in our callings and moderation of our paſſions, which the Goſpel requires and teaches, is the beſt remedy againſt them.

THE next intereſt of Man, which I ſhall ſpeak of, doth yet more nearly concern him, and that is *Health*, which is not only as one calls it the *Paradiſe of all ſenſual pleaſures*; wherein they grow and flouriſh, but the *Salt* that ſeaſons all our worldly comforts, without which we can find very little ſavour in them, yea, are not only incapable of enjoying all

all other things, but of enjoying our selves, yea, the want of it makes us as unable to do good as to enjoy good, but only as we may be examples of Faith and Patience to others. Now though Religion chiefly concerns the Soul, and seems to have little influence on Mens bodies, yet I will confidently affirm (what may seem a *Paradox* to many) that the precepts of Christ well observed would free as many from Diseases as his Miracles, they would prevent as many diseases as his miracles cured. How many are there whose bodies are filled with the sins of their souls, which they have tired and worn out in the service of their insatiable Lusts, which are like furious Riders, that tire out their Beasts they ride on before they be tired themselves. Though Men are not presently sensible of decayes in their health by riot, drunkennesse, and such like sins, they lay in daily the seeds of those diseases which many groan under in their old age, though others feel them

them sooner. We ordinarily say that *excesse* kills more than the *Sword*. By excesse we are not to understand only eating and drinking to surfeiting and drunkennesse, or till nature be so oppressed that it dischargeth it self of its burden, but when Men make their appetite not their reason, the measure of their allowance. It would require the skil of a Physician to enumerate the Diseases which are the effects of Mens sins, but every one may easily observe that the ordinary Rules which the best Physicians prescribe for the preservation of *Health*, require nothing more than *Temperance* and *exercise*, the former Religion strictly injoyns, and though it do not require the later as such, or under such a notion, yet in effect it requires it of most, commanding diligence in Mens callings, and condemning idlenesse, which is the source of so many diseases, as daily experience will evince, it being obvious to the observation of all, that *Health* is the poor Mans privilege, and sicknesse

neſſe moſt common among the Rich, who live in idleneſſe, though they have many other advantages above the poor for the preſervation of their health, beſides thoſe two cauſes of ſickneſſe there is a third, which religion doth remove, or at leaſt much correct, and that is, inordinate paſſions, ſuch as *Anger*, *Fear*, *Sorrow*, *Envy*, which have a very malignant influence upon the Body, and there is ſcarce any thing which tends ſo much to the poizing and ballancing of the humors of the body, (which is ſo neceſſary for the preſervation of the health) as a well compoſed temper of mind, and calmneſſe, and quietneſs in the Soul, which Religion doth not only teach, but (which is more) doth in a great meaſure effect, and therein exceeds the *morals* of *Phyloſophers* as we ſhall in due place more fully ſee.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Religion forbids us not any pleasures which are agreeable to nature, reason, or Mans own interest. None can more freely enjoy pleasures than a Godly Man.

THere is yet another thing which many account their great interest (and their great prejudice against Religion is, that they conceive it inconsistent therewith) and that is *Pleasure.* Now if we take *Pleasure* in a large sence as it is taken in Scripture, that inward Joy, Comfort and satisfaction which accompanies an holy Life, and those *everlasting pleasures* at Gods right hand, which a holy Life leads to, will fall afterwards under consideration. And as for those *bodily pleasures*, which in this place are chiefly intended, Religion doth not at all forbid them, nor deprive a Man of them;

and it is an unjuſt calumny of ſome that God hath put inclinations into mans nature to ſuch things as he hath forbidden him, and that this is the chief cauſe of ſo much ſin in the World: But theſe men know not what ſpirit they are of. It was the ſuggeſtion of the Devil to Man in Paradiſe, that God (as if he envyed mans happineſſe) had laid a reſtraint on them to keep them from that which (as the Devil would perſwade them) he knew might better their condition, and advance them to an equality with himſelf, as if it had been a ſmall matter that he had allowed them ſuch liberty to enjoy all the pleaſures of Paradiſe, and to eat of all the fruit of it, ſave only that in the midſt of the Garden. But they received a juſt recompence for believing the Devil rather than God. It is the ſame ſpirit which now perſwades Men that God hath dealt hardly with us, to interdict us the enjoyment of that wherein we might find ſuch pleaſure and

ſatisfaction, whereas he hath rather manifeſted his goodneſſe to Man, in that he hath put into him ſuch inclinations, as he may take pleaſure in thoſe things which are neceſſary for the *propagation* of the *ſpecies*, or for the *conſervation* of the *individuals* of Mankind; and he doth not forbid our pleaſure in theſe, but only forbids *Gluttony* and *Drunkenneſſe*, which is exceſs in the uſe of meats and drinks, and *Adultery*, which is the miſplacing of theſe deſires which he hath provided for the ſatisfaction of mankind without ſin: and we have no cauſe to complain of Gods bounding of us in theſe things, but rather wonder that there ſhould be any need of any Laws to forbid ſuch irregularities therein, as we ſhould wonder that any ſhould make Laws ſtrictly to forbid Men to burn their own houſes, to cut their own fleſh, to drink poyſon, if we conſider the miſchiefs that enſue upon our exceeding the limits which God hath yet ſet us in theſe things, in impairing our

Health, wasting our Estates, staining our honour, breeding discords in Families, depriving us of reason, and turning us into Bruits, exposing us sometimes to Mans rage, sometimes to the penalty of human Laws. In short, God hath not only provided for the supply of our necessities, but for our delight and comfort. *Psal.* 104. 15. 2ly. Religion allows a Man to enjoy and take comfort in these things which God hath given us. *Eccl.* 2. 24, 25, 26. 5. 18. 9. 7, 8, 9. Yea, requires we should rejoyce in them. *Deut.* 12. 7. 12. 18. *cap.* 14. 26. *cap.* 16. 11, 14. *cap.* 26. 11. 3ly. There is none can take more pleasure in these things than a Christian. *Eccl.* 2. 25. *Solomon* might hasten as much as any to such pleasure, not so much as he was a *King*, and had all things in abundance: but as he was a *good Man*, and in the favour of God. *Eccl.* 9. 7. But this I have elsewhere touched. Sect. 4. and sect. 8. If any account it hard to be restrained from *unnatural pleasures*, I may say as *Joash* of *Baal*,

Baal, *Judges* 6. 31. *Will you plead for* these? *He that will plead for* these, *let him presently be put to Death.* He that cannot content himself with *moderate pleasures*, without excesse, let him go and learn of Bruit-beasts, that will not eat and drink to Gluttony and Drunkennesse. He that cannot satisfie himself unless he may wholly prostitute himself to pleasure, and spend his whole time therein, as if he were put into the World, as the *Leviathan* into the Sea, *to play therein*: *Psal.* 104. 26. Let them learn of a *Heathen*, who would say, *He is not worthy the name of a Man, that would spend a whole day in pleasure.* So that Religion restrains us no more in the use of *Pleasures* than *nature*, *reason*, or our own interest restrains us, but rather teacheth us how we may enjoy them more pure and refined, without any sting of *guilt*, or check of Conscience, which may allay the sweetnesse of them.

SECT. VII.

The advantage which we have by Religion in reſpect of our Souls. Firſt, in being thereby reſtored to the image of God, and that ſpiritual beauty which hath been defaced by ſin.

I Now come yet nearer to our ſelves, to that Divine part whereby we hold intelligence with the upper World, have our Converſation in Heaven, with God and Angels, to theſe our bodies are but as a box, a caſe to a precious Jewel, and the advantages which I have hitherto ſpoken of are not worthy to be compared with theſe that Godlineſſe brings to the Soul. And I will firſt ſpeak of what a Godly Man hath thereby in *enjoyment* and *poſſeſſion*, then of what he hath in *hopes* and *reverſion*, and I will begin with the reſtoration of man to the condition from which

which he fell, or the *renewing of the image of God* in him. To have ſeen that great Monarch. *Dan.* 4. in the greateſt Glory, priding himſelf in his Majeſty, and after to have ſeen him not only deveſted of his Glory, degraded from his dignity, but deprived of his reaſon, and putting on the manners of Beaſts of the Field, and converſing amongſt them, would have moved a Mans compaſſion; though he, it is likely was no more ſenſible of his own unhappineſſe, (being bereaved of humanity) than thoſe in the fable, that being by the enchantments of *Circe* turned into Beaſts, diſdained the offer of *Ulyſſes* to have them reſtored to their former ſhape, being debaſed in their ſouls, as well as metamorphoſed in their bodies, and ſo not underſtanding the felicity of the rational life; but ſuch were the more to be pityed, by how much the leſſe they could pity themſelves. This is the condition of Mankind. We are all of a good houſe, well deſcended, of a noble ſtock and Di-

vine Original: but are fallen into decay, have loſt the luſtre of that Family from which we came, (being the off-ſpring of God) and we are become *like the Beaſts which periſh, Pſal.* 49. 21. So ſome underſtand that place, Man being in honor continued not, ſoon fell from his Eſtate of dignity and happineſs, and became bruitiſh in his knowledge and affections. Satan, that old Magician, by his enchantments hath bewitched us from that form wherein we were at firſt created, into the form of *Beaſts*; ſo that Men are become *Lions* for rage, cruelty, oppreſſion; *Foxes* for ſubtilty in evil; *Swine* for filthineſſe and uncleanneſs; *Dogs* for envy and malice; *Wolves* for rapine; yea, as the *wild Aſſes Colt* for folly and ſtupidity: the Scripture accounts it neither incivility nor calumny to deſcribe Men by ſuch compellations. Now it is only true Godlineſſe, and that regeneration, (which miſerable Man doth as little underſtand, and much deſpiſe, as thoſe even now mentioned,

ned, did the offer of *Ulysses*) which must restore us to our former state. The Gospel (as a spiritual charm) brings us to that shape and form which our first Parents lost. And though poor ignorant Men neither understand their own deformity, nor that beauty of holinesse which adorns the souls of those who are renewed, according to the Image of God, (as the Jews despised Christ, and esteemed him not, as seeing no form nor comlinesse in him, though he was to those who had a spiritual discerning, and an eye of Faith to see that Divine excellency and perfection that was in him, the chiefest of ten thousands, and altogether lovely) yet there is an inward beauty of the Soul, obvious only to the eyes of God that regards the hidden Man of the heart, and those who have a spiritual discerning to discern spiritual things, which (as the beauty of the outward man consists in *colour*, *proportion*, and *perfection of parts*.) stands in a due regard of every faculty and affection of the

ſoul to its proper object, and a juſt ſubordination to each other, the ſuperior irradiated by a Divine light to judge of every thing as the matter requires, and accordingly to command the inferior, which by an obſequious ſubjection yields to the authority, and executes the commands of the ſuperior, (and is not like a bone out of a joynt, which is not ſubject to the commands of the locomotive faculty) and the whole tinctured with a Divine holineſs, juſtice and goodneſs. It would be a ſad ſpectacle to behold a Man bowed together, that he could not look up, his eyes cloſed up with filthy putrid matter, his lips black, and ſwelled as if they were poyſoned, his breath ſtinking, to the offence of all that come near him, Lame of his feet, that he could not go, his bowels hanging out. In a word, from *head to foot full of bruiſes and putrifying ſores*, thus is man by nature to the eyes of God, bowed down to the earth, minding earthly things, his underſtanding darkened

ened, and the eyes thereof closed by vile and corrupt affections, his lips breaking out with filthy communication, as if the poyson of Asps were under them, his throat like an open Sepulchre, sending forth such unsavory discourse as is offensive to pure ears, that knows not how to tread a right step in the way of Gods commandments, void of the bowels of pity and compassion, and the plague of his heart, (his natural in-bred corruption) breaking forth daily into sinful actions which are as so many botches and sores to render a Man loathsom in the sight of God, to whom our inward Man is as naked and open as our outward Man to eyes of flesh. A form of Godliness and the paint or varnish of an outward profession, may help to conceal some of this deformity from the eyes of Man, but it is only that *Fountain set open to the house of* David, *and the Inhabitants of* Jerusalem *to wash in for sin, and for uncleaness*, that will restore to Man his primitive soundness and beauty,

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as *Naamans* fleſh by waſhing in *Jordan* was reſtored as the fleſh of a young Child. This is the immediate effect of Regeneration, and though the work is not perfected at once as to degrees, yet it will be *as the light that ſhines clearer and clearer till the perfect day, we being transformed daily more and more into the Image of God, from Glory to Glory by his Spirit.*

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

Tranquility of mind the priviledge of the Godly Man. A due ordering of the affections, not a ſtoical Apathy neceſſary thereto. Peace of Conſcience unknown to the Heathen Philoſophers, and attainable only by true Religion. Objections grounded on the moroſeneſs, and inward troubles of Chriſtians anſwered.

THE next advantage of the Soul, in this World by Godlineſſe, is *Tranquility of Mind*, whereby a Man is exempted from the importunity of inordinate paſſions, and from the ſecret (though ſevere) laſhes of an accuſing terrifying Conſcience, which wound deeper than Scorpions. This the *Philoſophers* cry up as the ſum of a happy life; but what is ſaid of

happineſſe in general, I may apply to this part of it: *Philoſophy* ſeeks it, *Theology* finds it, but *Religion* poſſeſſeth it. As *Paul* told the *Athenians*; he *declared unto them, him whom they ignorantly worſhipped.* So the *Chriſtian* diſcovers that which the *Heathen Moraliſt* blindly purſues, but it is only the *Godly Man* who hath his Soul throughly tinctured with true Grace that enjoyes this tranquility, and hereby I mean a ſedate calmneſſe of affections, whereby a man is freed from the terrors of an accuſing Conſcience, and from the *impetus* and violence of unruly paſſions, which make him as *the troubled Sea caſting up continually mire and dirt*, diſcovering in the effects of ſuch vile affections the filthineſſe that lies deep in the bottom of their hearts, ſo *foaming out their own ſhame*, theſe luſts (like the Devil in the poor man that caſt him ſometimes into the fire, and ſometimes into the water, or made him cut himſelf with ſtones) hurry men with violence, ſometime into one

one extream, ſometimes into another, and make them *pierce themſelves through with many ſorrows*, and make dreadful wounds and gaſhes in their own Conſciences, ruſhing them into a thouſand dangers, as the unruly horſe doth the Rider into the battel. But I have already ſaid enough of the diſeaſes, quarrels, and other inconveniences, that mens ſins ſubject them to, which are but the fulfilling of theſe importunate Luſts which will never let a man reſt, but are continually ſolliciting for ſatisfaction, and can never be ſatisfied, but enlarge themſelves continually, as Hell; and thoſe fleſhly Luſts do not only war *againſt* the Soul, but *in* the Soul againſt one another: this is our unhappineſs that we muſt ſerve *divers* Luſts, ſo that a man is not only (as one compares him) like a Servant in an Inne, where there are many Gueſts, ſome calling with importunity one way, ſome another, ſome up ſtairs, ſome down, but like thoſe that live on the Frontiers of a Kingdom, bordering

dering upon the Territories of another Prince, or betwixt two Garrisons in a civil War, his service is required of both, he knows not whom to obey, both require more taxes than he knows how to pay; thus is miserable man tortured, while he is a slave to his Lusts, one calls one way, another calls another way, *Pride* puts him upon one thing, *Covetousnesse* countermands, *Sensuality* calls him another way, *Pride* reclaims and tells him it will stain his reputation, spot his honour. Now for freeing a man from this basest slavery, the Gospel is much more effectual than all the precepts of morality, as it more clearly layes before us the expresse commands, and peremptory will and pleasure of the Soveraign Law-giver, as it inforceth these with promises and threatnings, of such things as there is either a deep silence of amongst the Philosophers, or which at least they descry but at a great distance, and seem to make some imperfect discovery of which the Gospel doth

doth evidently demonstrate. And which is more than all this, there doth a spirit of Life and Power accompany the Gospel where it is received, which changeth the Soul into another form; there is a Divine nature thereby communicated, whereby men become as it were new Creatures, have new thoughts, and new affections, whereby they now savour the things of the spirit, as they did before the things of the flesh. The Old Man is mortified by the spirit; that, as in old age *desire fails*, (as we have a proof in *Barzillai* that tasted not the sweetness of the Creatures, as formerly) so when a Mans Lusts are mortified, he hath not a desire after forbidden vanities, and the pleasures of sin as formerly. *Philosophy* indeed hath one *Polemo* to boast of, but the Gospel thousands whose natures have been so changed by its power, that they have become quite other persons, and whatever Morality can furnish us with to perswade, the Gospel hath the same in greater evidence,

and

and much more: besides, a Christian may more truly say of the Gospel, than one said of Philosophy, *he thereby learns to want what others enjoy*, not that any man hath more pleasure, or finds more content in what he possesseth, than the Christian, that hath all sweetened to him by the favour of God, and knows that it is not his only portion, that it shall not be said to him, as to others when they dye, *wo to you, ye have received your consolation*; but he doth not disquiet himself with the desire of more than God hath given him, and it is better to be content with a little, than to have much, and not to be satisfied, better to enjoy perfect health, and eat and drink no more than nature requires, than to be troubled with the βούλιμος, or *appetitus caninus*, and be continually eating, or a *Dropsie*, and be always drinking. So for those natural evils which are the objects of our fear and sorrow, as they are future and foreseen, or present and felt, the Christian hath the advantage of

of all others for bearing them, not only as *Hope, Patience, Meekneſſe* are the fruits of the ſpirit which he works by that ſpecial power and energy which he puts forth in Gods choſen ones; but as the Goſpel doth furniſh him with moral arguments, much more effectual to perſwade to patience, than any that are learned in the Schools of the Philoſophers, as *it is in vain to be troubled at what we cannot help: all good hath a mixture of evil, and all evil hath a mixture of good. There is a vicissitudo of fortunes, ſo that in adverſity a Man may hope that proſperity will ſucceed. We ſhould conſider the condition of others who ſuffer the like things with our ſelves. Bearing afflictions, will harden us to undergo them better,* (as Iron grows harder by being oft heated in the fire,) *ſometimes injuries prove advantagious to thoſe who ſuffer them.* Theſe and ſuch like rational conſiderations may help to correct the exceſſe of Mens paſſions, but it is only the Goſpel which diſcovers the care and ſingular love of God

God to his people in all the evils that befall them, he being with them, sympathizing with them, (so far as is consistent with his happiness and perfection) ordering all things by his wise and powerful Providence, sitting as a refiner, while he casts his Gold and Silver into the Furnace to purifie it, ordering all things for the good of his chosen: this may make us not only patient in tribulation, but *to glory* in it, not only to conquer in our sufferings, but to be *more then Conquerors*. Indeed all that assume to themselves the title of Christians, enjoy not this *tranquility*, for many arrogate this to themselves which belongs not to them, those that are Christians indeed, attain to this but by degrees, none are absolutely perfect in this life, and perfect peace of mind is not an absolute freedom from all passion, not an *apathy*, but *tranquillitas ordinis*, when every affection keeps its own place, and doth its proper work. When *Fear* is the *Souls Centinel* to warn it of ap-

approaching danger, that being forewarned, it may be fore-armed, when *Sorrow* is the *temper* of the Soul, or the ballaſt of it to keep it ſteady, *Angercos Fortit udinis & ingenii*, the mettle of it to fit it for action, and the *Oyl of Gladneſſe*, making the face to ſhine, and being as marrow to the bones, making our converſation more acceptable and agreeable unto others, our life more pleaſing and comfortable to our ſelves. But that wherein a Chriſtian hath the greateſt advantage is *Peace of Conſcience*, the importunate ſollicitations of Satan and our own Luſts, to the commiſſion of ſin are not ſo diſquieting to the Soul, as the rebukes and clamors of Conſcience after the commiſſion of it. The Devil is a meer *Trapan*, that draws Men into a Plot againſt Heaven, and when he hath enſnared them, is the firſt that accuſeth them, ſollicites men importunately to ſin by the ſtrongeſt enticements, afterwards affrights their Conſciences by aggravating their guilt to them, and this is a *pre-*

occupation

ccupation of Hell, as peace of con-cience, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt the firſt fruits and fore-taſt of leaven. As *Vertue is its own* reward, o ſin is its own puniſhment; guilt followes ſin, as the ſhaddow doth the body, haunting the ſinner like a hideous Ghoſt, and continually terrifying him. It is true, many do not feel theſe terrors, but it is not through any true ſetled peace that they have, but only a ſenſeleſſe ſtupid ignorance of their own danger, they are like a man aſleep on the top of a Maſt, do but awake them to ſee their danger, and it is enough to affright them into the infernal abyſs. While they go on quietly in ſin, they are but as a man which hath bribed the Serjeant, which doth not pay his debt, nor ſecure him againſt Arreſts, his debt increaſes ſtill, and he will have more to pay when he is arreſted. It is not a Merchants putting off the melancholick thoughts of his debts by pleaſures and divertiſements that will alwayes quiet his mind, he doth but be-

beguile himself, and increase his debt, it is the acquittance of his Creditor that can only secure him. This is the case of many, that when they are haunted, as *Saul* by the evil spirit of an accusing Conscience, as he had his musick to quiet his mind, they must have something to divert their thoughts from such disquieting and tormenting objects; but these are but like *Opiates*, which may stupifie for a time, and free from pains, but do nothing to the cure of the disease. It is only the blood of Christ that can *sprinkle our hearts from an evil Conscience, cleanse our Consciences from dead works*, only an effectual Faith that applies this blood to the Conscience. So that the Heathen Philosophers by all their prescriptions could never quiet the Consciences of sinners, and all that peace that they had was only from ignorance of that severe inexorable justice of God, (which will never pardon sin without satisfaction, and never be satified but by the sufferings of Jesus Christ)

Christ) and the nature of the Covenant of Grace, or the condition of the Gospel, that none should have any benefit by Jesus Christ but those who are united with him by an effectual Faith which produceth the fruits of holiness in a blameless upright conversation; so that as the blood of Christ is the cause of our reconciliation with God, by Faith and holiness, we actually patake and are assured of the fruits thereof: all these therefore are in several respects necessary to true peace of Conscience. Morality therefore can never teach a right way and means of it, to which the righteousness of faith is an hidden mystery. The loose prophane Christan can never attain it, while his conversation is evidently inconsistent with that true faith and Gospel sincerity, which is absolutely required of all that will be saved; and however they may flatter or cheat themselves into a vain presumption, or shut their eyes that they may not see their danger, they are con-

continually obnoxious to the affrights and alarms of such places of Scripture, as affirm that without holinesse none shall see God, that *if we live after the flesh we shall dye*; that *the Gate is strait, and the way narrow that leads to life, and there are few that find it*, that *many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able*: That *if any will be Christs Disciple, he must deny himself and take up his Cross and follow him*: That *whoever sayes he knows God, and keeps not his Commandments, or that he hath communion with God, and walks in darknesse, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him*: That *whoever seems to be Religious, and bridleth not his tongue, his Religion is vain*: That *he that loves Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or House, or Lands, more than Christ, is not worthy of him.* Besides, others clearly importing, that a Man may have much knowledge, and his judgment so far convinced, as to approve of the best things; may be much in holy duties, take delight in them, hear the

word with joy, do many things which he hears, be blameleſs as to his ontward carriage, and yet be an hypocrite. So that without daily exerciſing our ſelves to Godlineſſe, and a ſtrict watch over all our wayes, it is impoſſible to maintain a ſetled well grounded peace of Conſcience. If any object that there are none more diſquieted in their Conſciences, than thoſe that make the greateſt ſhew of Religion, none more melancholick and moroſe in their converſation; I may anſwer, *ſolid joy is a ſerious thing*, (as *Seneca* could ſay) it is not moſt ſeen in a forced laughter and jollity, which is as *thorns under a pot*, *Eccl. 7. 6.* that for the preſent makes a great noiſe and blaze, but neither heats nor laſts. In the *midſt of it the heart* many times *is ſorrowful, and the end of it is heavineſſe*, and, *as the heart knows its own ſorrow, the ſtranger intermeddleth not with its joy.* There is that comfort within, which every one cannot obſerve. A Godly man needs not have

have his heart revived with wine, and ſtrong drink, and merry company, like a ſick Man that is forced continually to have his ſpirits kept up with Cordials: He hath that within, which is better to him than Wine and Muſick. It is true, Godly Men have more inward conflicts in their Conſciences than others, but this proceeds from the ſenſe that they have of their own danger, as they ſay, *Wiſdom armes miſery againſt it ſelf*, that is, diſcovering the evils that we are obnoxious to, makes a Man more timerous and ſuſpicious, whiles *fools go on and are puniſhed* without any fear of danger, *go on as an Ox to the Slaughter, a fool to the Stocks, a Bird to the ſnare, and knows not that it is for her life.* It is time for a Man that knows, if he be not ſet upon the Rock that is higher than himſelf, if he be not upon that ſure Foundation, Jeſus Chriſt, he hangs by the ſmall thread of a brittle life, over the bottomleſſe pit, to look about him, and make his calling and election

ſure. Again the greater eſteem any one hath of Heavenly things, the more careful he is to make ſure of them, the more fearfull to be deceived about them, (*Tarda ſolet magnis rebus in eſſe fides.*) And further, when Satan, who before kept all things in peace, ſees himſelf in danger of being diſpoſſeſſed, he rageth the more, as he rent the poor man out of whom he was caſt almoſt to death. And God gives him leave ſometimes to winnow his deareſt Children for their tryal; but for the moſt part God leaveth them to ſuch diſquietment of ſpirit, and terrors of conſcience for ſome ſin, which they have fallen into, (as in *Davids* caſe) and then their trouble is not becauſe of their piety, but of their defect in it; or elſe it is before he intends to raiſe them to ſome great eminency, or fill them with ſome extraordinary joy: as we may obſerve, where Men have been raiſed exceeding high, their foundation hath been laid very low in ſome deep abaſement, and

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ſo God brings them *as a King out of Priſon to reign*; and ordinarily when God layes his people low, either by extraordinary outward afflictions, or inward temptations, he doth recompence them for it by thoſe inward conſolations, which are the fore-taſts of Heaven; hence proceeds that *joy* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, which is *unſpeakable and full of Glory*; which he that hath taſted the ſweetneſſe of it, would not want to be exempted from all thoſe Temptations and tryals which he hath been exerciſed with. The peace of wicked Men is but an *agreement with Hell, which ſhall be diſanulled; a Covenant with death, which ſhall be broken*, as the mirth of a Drunken Man, who whilſt his ſpirits are raiſed, feels not his wounds, but afterwards feels the ſmart of them, when his reaſon returns to him. That will be the woful end of the carnal mans ſecurity, if he be laid in the Bonds or Fetters of afflictions, and ſo come to himſelf and feel the wounds which he hath by ſin made in his

own conſcience, he is a *Magor miſſa bib*, terror round about; that is the reaſon of ſuch horror many times on ſick beds, which yet is better than to be huſhed aſleep by the charming pleaſures of ſin, and not awake till he be amidſt the everlaſting flames. So that we may ſay with the Prophet. *The work of righteouſneſſe is peace, and the effect of righteouſneſs, quietneſs and aſſurance for ever.* It is only by the righteouſneſſe of Jeſus Chriſt, imputed to us by faith, that we have peace with God, and ſo peace of Conſcience, which is as *a continual feaſt* daily to entertain us, as a *brazen wall*, alwayes to ſecure us, that we may alwayes find that within, wherewith we may ſolace our ſelves, and need not fear that any thing ſhall diſturb or diſquiet the *tranquillity* which we have in our own ſouls.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

The reward which Godly Men have after this life, the chief advantage of Religion. The excellency thereof demonſtrated from Scripture, from the ſatisfaction which the Angels have in it, from the glory which wicked Men enjoy in this World, from the ſweet fore-taſts which Godly men have of it in this life. Wherein it conſiſts, the glory of the body, the happineſs of the Soul, in the enjoyment of God, in communion with the whole number of perfected Saints, and that for ever.

ALL that I have hitherto ſaid of the advantage of Godlyneſs, is little in reſpect of what remains to be ſpoken. The eſtate of Man after this life is of more important conſideration, as it is u-

ſually ſaid, there is no proportion betwixt finite and infinite, as there is betwixt two things that are finite, though at the greateſt diſtance in reſpect of their natures, quality, quantity: ſo there is a proportion between a *minute* and a *thouſand years*, and minutes may eaſily be multiplyed to ſuch a quantity; but there is no proportion betwixt a *thouſand years* and *Eternity*. So that if the miſery of Chriſtians in this life were anſwerable to wicked mens prejudice, and the happineſs of wicked men anſwerable to their own deſires, and if both might live in theſe two different eſtates a thouſands years twice told; yea, and ſuppoſe that after this life wicked men were to be happy to ſeven, and Godly men but to eight, (as the Philoſophers ſpeak of the degrees of heat and cold) or that Godly men ſhould be as miſerable as wicked men, abating only one degree, yet the conſideration of an Eternity would eaſily præponderate in comparing the ſeveral ſtates of theſe perſons.

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The Apostle saith, that *if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable*, not that a wicked man hath more real joy or comfort in this life than a Godly man, but we must consider that the Apostle is disputing against such as denied the Resurrection in a popular Rhetorical stile, wherein words are not to be subjected to a rigid interpretation, but to be expounded in a greater latitude, and it is usual in several languages to expresse a thing with the greater *Emphasis* by the *Superlative degree*, as if he had said, we are very miserable men, if our hope be only in this life. Again there may be an *Emphasis* in the *Pronoun*; *q. d. we* who are the off-scouring of all things in the eyes of the World, and have in these times of Persecution run such hazards and quitted our worldly enjoyments for the hopes of a glorious Resurrection, are miserably deceived, if there be no Resurrection. And further, though Christians have that inward peace and comfort in outward tribulations, which doth

more than counterballance them, yet this joy is in hope of the Glory of God, and but an anticipation of that joyful Resurrection which hereafter they expect. And now I shall come to speak something of the certainty of it, of the the nature of it, and of the strictnesse of holinesse necessary to those who would enjoy it, & that we may raise our thoughts to hold some proportion with the greatnesse of that glory, though it be not possible for poor Mortals to have an adequate conception thereof. *First*, let us consider the great things that God himself hath spoken of it, and how he hath throughout the Scripture propounded it as a sufficient and an abundant recompence, for whatsoever we can do and suffer for him, in comparison where with all the afflictions of this life, are but light and inconsiderable. The Apostle tells us, *God is not ashamed to be called the God of his people, having prepared a City for them.* The preparations that he hath made for them, are answerable

ſwerable to the bounty and munificence of ſuch a Majeſty; though they here mourn whilſt others rejoyce, and though he here make them bear the Croſs, whilſt his profeſſed Enemies wear the Crown. Now it would be much below the greatneſſe and glory of ſuch a Majeſty, to boaſt of his own gifts above the real worth of them, and flatter men into his ſervice by poſſeſſing them with high expectations of great matters, which the enjoyment of will not anſwer the hopes which God himſelf hath drawn us into. And we may be moſt ſecure that he will not give ſuch advantage to any Creature to enter into judgment with him. Now let us conſider what ſome of us have ſeen in the interviews, perhaps of Princes, the Coronation or marriage of Kings, or on other occaſions, yet we have heard of more than we have ſeen. We have heard of the Glory of *Solomon*, and many other great Princes, exceeding what our times have to boaſt of, and yet we can enlarge our

thoughts

thoughts to ſomething above theſe, and let our minds wander into the four corners of the earth, to fetch in the Glory and ſplendor of the World; to make up to our ſelves an *Idea* of happineſſe, and yet when we have framed ſuch an *Utopia*, ſuch an imaginary Glory, God (who is too great, and too good, to deceive poor mortals) hath given us to underſtand that his preparations for his Saints are ſomewhat above all this, and that *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of Man conceived what he hath laid up for thoſe that love him.*

In the next place, let us conſider that it is the bleſſed ſtate of Angels, which are firſt of more enlarged capacities than Men, and yet they find a perfect felicity therein. We ſhould not make a judgment of the ſtate, and magnificence of a Princes Court, by the reports of ſome poor Peaſant, who (we might eaſily imagine) would be ready to admire any thing which he ſhould ſee above the pomp of his Landlords houſe, where

where he used perhaps to labour, or go sometimes to pay some poor rent, but we should more easily believe some noble Courtier of a more raised mind, or some Ambassador that hath seen the pomp of several Princes Courts, and knows what belongs to State and greatness. It had been no great matter to have heard *Paul* boast of what he saw in Paradise, who was carryed from these poor Cottages of clay, to the Court of Heaven; like *David* from the Sheepfold to *Sauls* Court. But the Angels continually adoring the Glory of their King, and singing perpetual *Hallelujahs* to him, doth easily perswade that the Glory of the Cœlestial Court, is far above what mortal eyes ever saw. And besides, the enlarged capacities of Angels, we may consider that they are incorporeal, so that these corporeal delights and pleasures, which we have the most clear and lively apprehension of, make up none of their happiness; but, besides such delights, which its

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likely we ſhall not want in Heaven, (there are more pure and ſpiritual delights, enough to make an Angel happy; which we can ſcarce conceive any thing of. A further conſideration, which may argue the happineſſe of that future ſtate, is the greatneſs and Glory of many wicked men here in this World. Let us but conſider, how the great ones of the Earth, many of which have been wicked men, do bath themſelves continually in Rivers of pleaſure, and enjoy for many years together whatever their hearts can wiſh, and what we ordinarily ſee great ones now enjoy is little to the Glory of a *Belſhazzer*, a *Darius*, an *Alexander*, a *Nero*, the *Grand Signior*, the Kings of *China*; and yet all this is but as the crumbs that fall from the Childrens table. What then can we imagine them to be fed with? theſe are but the ſpillings, or the overflowings of his bounty to his very Enemies: how great then is that which he hath reſerved for

thoſe,

those, to whom he hath purposed to *shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace*, to give the World a proof of his bounty and Glory? as a Prince that would make an entertainment for ostentation, and shew his great respect to some of his special and most beloved friends. We read often in Scripture of the preparations that God hath made for his Saints, which is but a metaphorical expression of the greatnesse of that glory, which he hath ordained them to; as those entertainments which Men do long prepare for, do far exceed what they on a sudden make, being unawares surprized by the coming of their friends. I will yet add another proof of the greatnesse of that Glory, which we hope for; taken from the fore-tasts, which many have of it here, which hath made them Glory in tribulations, triumph in the flames, and not only abated, but wholly taken away the sense of the most exquisite torments, that some *Martyrs* have felt no more in the fire, than if they had

had been in a bed of Roſes. Some after long conflicts and terrors, have had ſuch raviſhing joys, that they have cryed to God to hold, they could bear no more. If ſuch glimpſes have ſo raviſhed them, what is the full view and clear viſion? Let us imagine a confection, the leaſt drop of which diſtilled into a draught of Gall, or Wormwood, or whatever can be ſuppoſed to be more bitter and diſtaſtful, ſhould wholly alter the taſt of it, making it moſt pleaſing and delicious, how ſweet would a full draught of it be without the leaſt mixture of any thing diſtaſtful and unpleaſing: ſo if ſuch drops of ſpiritual joys are able to ſweeten the bittereſt cup of afflictions, what ſhall we think of bathing our ſelves, and drinking our fill in thoſe Rivers of pleaſure at Gods right hand for evermore, without the leaſt mixture of any ſorrow or trouble to allay the ſweetneſſe thereof?

I have hitherto in general ſhewed that the *Glory of Heaven* is like to be very great and inconceivable,

ceivable, much more inexpreſſible, but I have not yet attempted to ſhew what it is, or wherein it conſiſts, and while I ſay it is not to be expreſſed, if I ſhould go about to ſet it forth fully, there would be *contradiction in terminis*, ſo that all I dare pretend to, is ſome rude delineation of that ſtate of happineſſe. Man is made up of two eſſential parts, Soul and Body, now though the Soul be the more noble part, yet doubtleſſe the body ſhall have its ſhare in this felicity. If God hath ſo far honoured them, as to make them the *Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*, and given Chriſt a charge that he ſhould loſe *nothing* of what he hath given him, but raiſe up our ſcattered duſt at the laſt day, *Joh.* 6. 39. he hath certainly reſerved a reward for that which hath had ſo great a ſhare in our ſufferings here; and he hath told us in general, that he will by his Divine power *change our vile bodies, and make them like his glorious body*, but ſure as we approach nearer to the nature of God in

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our ſouls, ſo they ſhall have the greateſt ſhare of future Glory, and in general it ſhall be with the Glory wherewith Chriſt was glorified from Eternity, and after his ſuffering, and this ſhall be by the *enjoyment* of God, which is *the acting of the perfected faculties and affections of our Souls upon him.* Every ſenſe hath its proper object in the enjoyment of which it takes complacency according to the ſuitableneſſe of the object thereto, and according to the nature of the *object*, and the capacity of the ſenſe for receiving it, or acting upon it, ſuch is the pleaſure that it finds therein, and the more noble the faculty and the object are, the more noble is the delight which ariſeth from the Union betwixt them, ſo that all Philoſophers are agreed, that intellectual delights exceed ſenſual pleaſures. Now in Heaven our Souls ſhall be perfected according to the capacity of a finite being; otherwiſe they would be no more capable of enjoying God, than a deaf man of being de-

delighted with muſick, or a blind man in the moſt perfect beauty, therefore we are ſaid *to be made meet, to be partakers of an inheritance with the Saints in light*; *ſanctification*, qualifying us *naturally* for Heaven, as *juſtification* doth *morally*; and God himſelf ſhall be the object of our happineſſe, whom we ſhall ſee as he is, and love him, and delight in him according to his goodneſſe and glory; I know it is hard for us to conceive what it is to enjoy God, but to help us in the conception of it, let us conſider a little what it is to enjoy a friend, to have an abſent friend is a comfort, but to be with him is a great addition to our contentment, to receive the expreſſions of their love, and to teſtifie ours to them. Thoſe who are of a more noble and generous complexion, find more true ſatisfaction herein, than in whatever elſe this World can afford them, and what is it that endears another to us, but *Love* and *Lovelineſſe*? where there are amiable endowments in perſons of worth,

worth, they command an esteem from us, though they know us not, and though we are never the better for them; but where they have a particular affection to us, take us into their bosom, make us of their entire friends, this doth much more endear them to us. Now (as I have already said) we find in God, in a far more eminent degree, that which renders the Creatures amiable and lovely. Besides his *goodnesse* towards the whole Creation, which the Earth is full of, his special favour to Mankind, and it may be to us above many thousands of others; the *exceeding Riches of Grace* towards the *Elect*, which Men and Angels shall admire to the days of Eternity, there is that *Beauty* (that is intellectual beauty, or such Beauty as is objected to the understanding) which will ravish the whole intellectual Creation. His *Wisdom* is unsearchable, his *Power* irresistable, and his *Grace* and Clemency as far exceeding what is to be found in the Creature, as his *Majesty*

jesty an d *Glory*. *Job* had heard of God, but when he came to see him, abhorred himself to see the infinite distance betwixt the Soveraign Creator, and a poor Mortal; that durst dispute the case with him. Oh! what thoughts shall we have of God when we come to see him as he is? What astonishment will seize upon us? what confusion will cover us when we see what a God it is, whose grace we have so oft despised, whose patience we have so long abused, whose authority we have so boldly contemned, and yet see that he who had us alwayes at his mercy, and could at his pleasure avenge himself on us, should pardon us for his own sake, and make such glorious preparations for us? We shall then perfectly understand all the dimensions of his love, and continually as it were read the stories of it. We may the better conceive of it by fancying to our selves, what a singular favour it would be to have some great Prince take a singular affection to us, though we did the least

leaſt of any in the World deſerve it, and had diſ-obliged him by a thouſand provocations, if he ſhould take us home to his houſe, and maintain us alwayes at his table, keep us alwayes in his preſence, this would fall infinitely ſhort of that love which God will manifeſt to us, and what an addition will it be to our happineſſe to ſee him in his Glory, who hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood? the ſtory of whoſe love we have ſo oft read over, a ſight of whoſe Face though but through the Glaſs of Faith we have ſo oft, ſo long deſired and lamented after, to have the ſociety of the innumerable company of Angels, and the general aſſembly of juſt men made perfect, a meeting of the Saints of all Ages and places, and theſe perfected both in Grace and Glory, ſo that they ſhall have no infirmities, no Pride, Ignorance, ſelf-ſeeking to exerciſe our charity or patience; no ſufferings to move our pity, or compaſſion; and we ſhall never need to diſquiet our ſelves with the

the thoughts of such a sad parting as *Paul* had, *Acts* 20. 39. We shall keep an *everlasting Holy-Day*, the marriage of the Lamb shall be for ever celebrated by all his Friends, and as *Eternity* will perpetuate our happinesse, and make it the greater *extensivè*, so the assurance and consideration hereof will heighten it, and make it greater *intensivè*, and every moment of our felicity will be more sweet to us, in that we shall never be disquieted with the thoughts that our condition (as happy as it is) will one day have an end.

SECT.

SECT. X.

The neceſſity of holineſs to ſalvation, proved by many plain Scriptures. Objections anſwered. The imprudence of being but formal half Chriſtians, and the advantages that ſtrict ſerious Chriſtians have above ſuch.

THere is yet another conſideration which will much enhance the glory of Heaven; but before I come to ſpeak of that, I muſt ſhew how neceſſary an holy converſation is to the enjoyment of it. Many have entertained a ſuſpition, that ſome moroſe Men peeviſhly envious againſt the happineſſe and contentment of Mankind, and too ſuperſtitiouſly preciſe, would lay upon them a yoke which neither they, nor their Fathers were able to bear, confining their liberty to too narrow bounds, and frighting them from Religion, by exacting

ing so much strictnesse and severity. Now that I may not seem to any to make the way to Heaven more narrow than God hath made it, I will but set down the plain words of God himself, not to speak of what those have attained to, who yet are plainly declared to be under the sentence of condemnation, and in a state of wrath. I shall only instance in some places where the Scripture sets down what is indispensibly necessary to salvation, or what doth plainly argue, a Man to be in the state of damnation. *Math.* 5. 20. *I say unto you, that except your righteousnesse exceed the righteousnesse of the Scribes and Pharisees,* (who yet went a great way in the Profession of Religion, and in both Moral and Ceremonial righteousnesse) *you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Cap. 6. 20. *Where your Treasure is, there will your heart be also.* Cap. 7. 13. *Enter ye in at the strait Gate, for wide is the Gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there be many which go in thereat; but*

ſtrait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Verſe 21. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* cap. 12. 36. *Every idle word that a man ſhall ſpeak he ſhall give an account thereof in the Day of Judgment.* Cap. 16. 24. *If any Man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs and follow me.* Mark. 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed when he comes in the Glory of the Father with his holy Angels.* Luk. 13. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate, for many I ſay, unto you ſhall ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able.* John. 3. 5. *Except a Man be born of water, and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Rom. 8. 9. *If any Man have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.* Verſe. 13. *If ye live after the fleſh ye ſhall dye,* 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any Man be in Chriſt, he is a new*

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Creature. Gal. 5. 6. *For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion avails any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but Faith that worketh by love.* Cap. 6. 7, 8. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap; for he that ſoweth to the fleſh, ſhall of his fleſh alſo reap corruption, but he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting.* Heb. 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* Jam. 2. 19, 20. *Thou believeſt there is one God, thou doſt well: the Devils alſo believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?* 1 Pet. 4. 18. *If the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ſinner and the ungodly appear?* 1 John 1. 6. *If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſſe, we lye and do not the truth.* Cap. 2. 4. *He that ſaith I know him and keepeth not his commandments, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him.* I might add many like words out of the Scripture of truth, but it may be theſe are e-

nough to make many say, *Who then can be saved?* But let God be true whatever becomes of Man, and it is that which hath been told us, that few find the narrow way that leads to life. If any object the failings of such as *David* and *Peter*, the same Scriptures that tell of them, tell us of their repentance and bitter tears. If any wonder how this should be consistent with the mercy of God, I answer there are other objects whereon he sheweth the Riches of his mercy, even the small remnant that shall be saved. And when we come to see (at the last day) the evil of sin, the holinesse of God, the preparations which God hath made for sinners, we shall rather admire that he should save any, than that he should save no more. And if the pardon of sin were such a light matter that God should be charged with severity, if he hearken not to the *cries* of *sinners*, which necessity doth at last force them to, he might have spared the trouble (as I may take liberty to speak) of sending his son;

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yea, (as I may further ſay) *ſpared* his glorying of his unconceivable love in giving Chriſt to dye for ſinners, and it is an ignorant conceit to think that ſuch a ſtrict exaction of holyneſſe ſtraitens the grace of the Goſpel when it is much of the Grace we receive by Chriſt to be *turned from our iniquities*, *Acts* 3. 26. *Rom.* 7. 1. *&c.* The end of our redemption is to be a *peculiar people zealous of good works*. *Tit.* 2. 14. The chief article of the Covenant of Grace is to have the *Law of God written in our hearts*, *Heb.* 8. 9. our chief glory to be *like our heavenly Father in holyneſſe*. 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. The great advantage we have by the promiſes to be made *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 *Per.* 1. 4. So that let men flatter themſelves with vain preſumptions, and delude their own ſouls by drawing their deſires into opinion, and from wiſhing, they might have peace, though they go on in the wayes of their own hearts, proceed to believe that it will be ſo. *Theſe words will cer-*

tainly take hold of them, Zach. 1. 6. *and judge them at the last day.* I may further add, that it is the greatest imprudence for men to be but half Christians, or to make some profession of Religion, and not to strive to attain to some perfection in it, both as the reflection on such an indifferency, or lukewarmness, will be an aggravation of *Mens* misery, while they shall think with themselves they were near to the Kingdom of Heaven, and were shut out because they went not a little further, they were fair for striking a bargain for the *Rich Pearl*, and yet parted for a small matter. As if a Merchant should go near to *Peru*, or some other place where there is Gold in abundance, and through a sluggish lazy stupidity, come back empty; or as if *Columbus*, when he was near to the Coasts of *America*, should have been forced, through the mutiny of his Soldiers, to return and lose the honour and advantage of his enterprize. It is pity to run a race, and lose the

the prize through negligence, when we come within a few ſteps of the Goal. If we will do any thing in Religion, let us go through with it, and not loſe the future reward of it, which is moſt conſiderable through ſloathfulneſs. And it is further to be conſidered, that thoſe who are but half Chriſtians and ſmatterers in Religion, know nothing of thoſe ſpiritual comforts, that delight in communion with God in his ordinances, joy in the Holy Ghoſt, which thoſe who are truly Godly have experience of: thoſe who are but ſmatterers or bunglers in any Art, Science, Trade, find them difficult, when they are eaſie and delightful to thoſe who are Maſters of them, and throughly underſtand them; as the wiſe Man ſaith, *knowledge is eaſie to him that underſtands.* As there is great difference in the reading of a *Claſſick*, Author by the *Maſter* and the *Schollar*, the *Schollar* looks upon it as a great task to conſtrue it, and is glad when it is over, not minding

the things themſelves expreſſed by the words, while the Maſter who minds the matter, and underſtands it well, is tranſported with pleaſure to obſerve the *elegancy* of *ſtile*, *height* of *fancy*, *depth* of *judgment*, *ſtrength* of *reaſon*, *ſubtilty* of *Wit*, *candor* of *mind* which is in the Author. So, while a Man is but a Chriſtian in name, and hath but a form of Godlineſſe, the exerciſes of Religion are a burthen to him, and he doth them only as a task to eſcape Hell fire, as a School-boy gets his Leſſon to eſcape the Rod, but he that is a Chriſtian indeed, finds that ſweetneſſe in the word of God, that it is to him as *honey and the honey comb*, *the joy and rejoycing of his Soul*. He is glad when he can ſteal an opportunity to pray; he finds ſo much comfort in communion with God therein, and can ſay with Chriſt; it is *his meat to do the will of his Heavenly Father*, and the teſtimony of his Conſcience is to him as a *continual feaſt*, and makes the practice of holineſſe more pleaſant to him

him, than all the delights of sin are to a wicked man. And as it is in trading, he that doth not throughly understand his Trade, cannot make his best advantage of it to thrive by it, and so grows weary of it, or turns bankrupt; when he that is well seen in the mystery of it, and knows how to improve every opportunity of gain, and so finds the benefit of it, makes a pleasure of his business, and will not be perswaded to leave it off. So he that is but a Christian in shew, and finds not that real advantage which others do of a strict walking with God, nor any return of their formal heartlesse prayers, grow weary of Religion, and at length it may be cast it off, while the real serious Christian by the Rich returns of his sincere and fervent prayers, and the benefit which he finds by a close walking with God, is so confirmed in his holy profession, that nothing shall make him cast it off, or think it a burden.

SECT. XI.

The misery of wicked Men after this life demonstrated from Scriptures, from the sufferings of Godly Men here in this World, from terrors of conscience in good and bad, from the Devils trembling at the thoughts of it, which they have not so much reason for as Man. The punishment of losse with the aggravations of it. The punishment of sense exquisite, without allay or intermission, without end.

I Shall now proceed to that other consideration, which will make the happinesse of Heaven much greater; yea which considered apart, doth much commend the excellency of Holinesse, and clearly demonstrate how much it

it is the *interest* of *mankind* to follow after it, *damnum emergens* is as much to be considered as *lucrum cessans*. We should not only consider the *reward of Holiness*, but the *wages of sin*; if a sinner could cease to be, or might be annihilated when he dyes, or if there were any state between Heaven and Hell, our plea would have less force: but there will be but two ranks of Men at the last judgment, whereof one shall go into *eternal life*, the other into *everlasting punishment*. *Mat.* 25. 46. Now I shall use the same method in considering this state of ungodly men after the end of the World, which I followed in considering the state of holy men. First, giving some general demonstrations of the misery of it, then some particular reasons why it will be so intollerable. As first, the Glory of Heaven may be imagined to be exceeding great by the preparations which God is said to have made for it: so by the same *Anthropopathy* we may conceive of the misery of Hell, God being said

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to prepare the punishment of the damned. *Mat.* 25. 41. It is said indeed it is *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, but wicked men shall be co-heirs with them of the same misery. He is laying up his *pile of Fire and Wood. Isa.* 30. 33. and laying sinners as stubble in the Sun to dry, that the eternal flames may prey more furiously upon them, *Nahum* 1. 10. suffering them to *fill up the measure of their iniquity, and so to treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath*, that they may be *fit for destruction*. Let us in the next place consider what Godly men have suffered in this Life, read but the *Martyrologies* and see the dreadful torments that the Martyrs have suffered, enough to make one tremble at the reading of them; and if these things be done to the green tree, those who are the objects of Gods love, and dear unto him as the apple of his eye, such on whom he hath determined to shew the Riches of his mercy, what will be done to the dry with whom he is *angry every day*,

day, and on whom he will ſhew the *power of his wrath? if judgment begin at the houſe of God, what will be the end of thoſe that obey not the Goſpel?* Further, let us conſider the terrors of Conſcience which Godly men have ſuffered in this World, when they have had lively apprehenſions of the diſpleaſure of God againſt them. If his *rebukes have made them conſume as a moth, fretting a garment*, if his frowns have diſtracted them and made them *roar through the diſquietneſſe of their ſpirit*; What will it be for his jealouſie to ſmoak and his wrath to burn like fire for ever? Again, let us conſider what horrors wicked men have felt in their conſciences in this life, which are but the foretaſts of that miſery which they ſhall endure for ever. Read but the ſtories of *Vaninus*, *Spira*, &c. who have dyed in deſpair, if ſuch drops of wrath let fall like ſcalding Lead upon the Soul, have ſo hideouſly amazed and terrified, ſurely it is dreadful and aſtoniſhing to be *caſt into the lake that burns with fire*.

fire and brimstone for ever. And though there be many now can harden themselves against God; and think by a *stoical apathy* to bear whatever God can inflict, yet some have found the beginnings of Hell in their Consciences, worse a thousand times than all the torments which the cruelty of Tyrants, or incarnate furies could ever invent. And whereas some may think (with *Spira*) that the expectation of future misery, is worse than the suffering of it, it is a wide mistake, *for according as Man feareth, so is his anger,* Psal. 90. 11. ordinary calamities indeed are for the most part worse feared than felt, but when a man hath raised his mind to the most dreadful and amazing apprehensions of the displeasure of God, and the severity of his vengeance, he cannot reach the vastnesse of it, there is yet *à plus ultra,* somewhat further, as it is in our apprehensions of the Glory and happinesse of Heaven: and at the last day the great and mighty men of the World, who have set

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the judgements of God far above, out of their ſight, and ſcorned his threats, as a meer *brutum fulmen*, or a *Mormo* to fright Children and ſuperſtitious fools, would be glad if they knew how, to run under the Rocks and Mountains to hide themſelves from the terrible Majeſty of their Judge, and (to allude to the words of S. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 11. Let ſuch think that as God is now in his word when he ſeems to be abſent from them, ſuch will he be alſo indeed, when he ſhall manifeſt his preſence and his righteous judgment. We begin to think meanly of all whom we can ſee through or go about, it is incomprehenſibleneſs that commands a veneration, & that we ſhall alwayes find in God both as to the Glory of his Grace, and as to the greatneſſe of his Power and wrath. Let us yet go a ſtep further, and conſider the apprehenſions which the *Devils* have of this condition, (for they and wicked men (as was before obſerved) are fellow heirs of the ſame miſery) and theſe tremble

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at the thoughts of it, that is, have dread full amazing apprehensions at the expectation of it, the *consequent* in that place being put for the *antecedent*, according to the usual *phraseology* of Scripture; they seem not to have so much reason to be troubled at the thoughts of it as men have, their sins perhaps may have some aggravations, which the sins of Men have not; yet, I think there is nothing can aggravate it so as the contempt of the Gospel, which they are not guilty of. They had not a *board after Shipwrack*, whereon they might have saved themselves, if it had not been their own fault. Again, they have no bodies to be tormented as we have, many cannot apprehend how the Soul should be capable of any considerable torment, and they think they could laugh at any punishment that could be inflicted on the Soul, were it not for bodily sufferings, which they have a clearer apprehension, and a more lively sense of: but, besides all that we are capable

of.

of ſuffering in our bodies, we are capable of ſuffering the ſame in our ſouls, which the Devils are ſaid to tremble at the belief of, but it is with us, as it is with little Children, who are pleaſed perhaps with the pomp of their Fathers or Mothers Funeral, and proud of their mourning Cloaths, but are not ſenſible of their own loſſe, when thoſe that are grown up to years of reaſon and judgement, wring their hands to think of what ſad conſequence ſuch a loſſe will be to them. And in this reſpect it is ſaid, *Wiſdom arms miſery againſt it ſelf.* We glory in that which is our ſhame, and the cauſe of our miſery, while the Devils tremble, who know what it is to loſe Heaven, (having been already in it) and know what Hell is, becauſe they have felt it, they certainly believe theſe things, having more underſtanding to apprehend the clear demonſtrations of the truth of them, they have their minds more fixed on theſe things which are the matter of their torment being more in *act*

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and leſſe in *Power* than we are. We know not now what it is to loſe God and Heaven, but we ſhall know when we ſhall ſee them, not to *enjoy* them, but to *envy* them. We are ready to flatter our ſelves into hopes, that theſe things may not be true; or our thoughts are ordinarily diverted to other things. And the Devil keeps that out of our minds, which he knows not how to keep out of his own, leſt conſidering well of it, we ſhould be induced thereby to believe, and ſo obtain ſalvation. *Luke* 8. 14. For a concluſion of theſe general demonſtrations, I might add Chriſts importunate preſſing of Men to flee from the wrath to come, though through ſo many hardſhips and difficulties, which he calls them to: he wept over ſinners, and was grieved for the hardneſſe of their hearts, as ſometimes *Jeremy* was, or as *Aidanus*, a good man in this Nation, wept to think of the miſeries which were coming upon it. Sinners go on careleſly and ſecurely, *like an Ox to the Slaughter*

or a fool to the correction of the ſtocks, but Chriſt paſſionately pleads with them, to divert them from their own wayes, knowing how little they conſider the miſery of thoſe devouring flames, which they are caſting themſelves into. Now for proving more particularly, that this miſery which ungodly men ſhall endure, is very ſad and dreadful. Firſt, we ſhall not only know (as I before intimated) the worth of that Glory which we have loſt, but we ſhall be convinced that we have loſt it through our own fault. Many think now to harden themſelves at the day of judgement againſt God, and impeach him of rigor and injuſtice, if he ſhould doom them to an Eternal Hell, but then when their Conſciences are awakened, they will own their guilt, and ſay as *Judas*, *I have ſinned*. *Mat.* 27. 4. though he did nothing but by the *determinate counſel and fore-knowledge of God*, and that which *Satan had put into his heart*. John 13. 2. Act. 2. 23. And it will be an aggravation of Mens miſery,

misery, that they should lose Heaven through their own careleſſeneſſe, and exchange it for a trifle: should a Man have a dear Wife dangerously sick, and give her poyson to kill her, instead of Physick to cure her, meerly through his own negligence, surely he would bury himself with her, when he should see his own oversight, or should he in a drunken fit stab his Children, certainly his first work after he should come to himself again, would be to stab himself; but what are these to our souls, our *darlings*, our only ones *Psal.*22.10. which we wound worse than the poor Lunatick man, that cut himself with stones: we shall come to our selves, and have far different apprehensions of all things, as soon as our souls look out of these dark prisons of our bodies, and begin to see by the light of another World. A child that should have the writings of a fair Estate, and sell them for trifles, looking but upon the bulk of paper or parchment, not regarding the contents of them,

and

and afterwards when he comes to be a Man, ſhould live in diſgrace and miſery, whiles he ſees another bear high in the World with his Eſtate, would bewail too late his own childiſh vanity; but what is this to our ſelling of our hopes of Heaven for the pleaſures of ſin, in the midſt of which *the heart is ſorrowful*, and *the end of which is heavineſſe?* regarding the Goſpel no more than a ſtory out of *Pliny*, looking on the Scriptures but as waſt papers, *Cleopatra's* prodigality in drinking a little Pearl at one draught was nothing to ours, we were never put to it as *Liſymachus*, to loſe a Kingdom, and ſubject our ſelves to perpetual ſlavery for a draught of water. Oh! with what indignation ſhall we reflect upon our own folly and madneſſe, when we ſhall have time and occaſion to ſettle theſe things in our hearts, we ſhall need no Devils to torment us, no fire to burn us, our own conſciences will continually ſcourge us, and we ſhall for ever be our own tormenters, when we

ſhall

ſhall be awakened to *ſmite upon our thigh and ſay, what have I done?* there will be yet a further puniſhment of ſenſe, the Scripture calls it Fire and Brimſtone, which if we underſtand literally, and in a proper ſenſe, we may eaſily imagine the dreadfulneſſe of ſuch a puniſhment, or at leaſt learn to underſtand it by holding our hand in a hot furnace but for one minute, and this is fire, which ſhall not ſuddenly devour or annihilate us (as ſome imagine) but prey eternally upon men, and never conſume them, otherwiſe the Devils, with whom (as I have obſerved) we ſhall ſhare in the ſame miſery would rather rejoyce, than tremble at the thoughts of the laſt judgement, if they ſhould then be preſently reduced to nothing. See more of this in *Auſtin De civitate Dei. lib.* 21. *cap.* 10. But if we underſtand this figuratively, or metaphorically, then certainly God hath choſen that which is the moſt exquiſite pain, which we can conceive of, to ſet forth ſomething elſe which we know

know not how otherwise to frame a notion of in our minds, and which doth as far exceed such sensible things, as are used to express it, as the Glory of Heaven doth exceed all that Glory which is borrowed from the Creatures to express it to our weak imperfect understandings. Further, this punishment will be without any allay, in Hell there is pure darkness, there will not be a drop of water allowed to refresh in those raging flames, and company which some talk of, will but increase mens torment; and as there will be no allay, so no intermission, no *lucida intervalla*, as there will be no *night of Darkness* in Heaven, so there will be no *night of rest* in Hell, and to compleat the misery of that condition, there will be no end of it. Eternity will make their misery perpetual, but the belief and consideration of eternity will make it insupportable, and swallow Men up in a hideous despair, they shall be like men tossed in the midst of the Sea, the Waves rolling one after

ter another, if he could see any land behind those proud surges, there might be some hopes; but to see nothing but the vast Ocean, and the Waves swelling higher and higher, and raging against him like a Giant, this is that which amazeth him: and such will the thoughts of Eternity be then to miserable sinners, when lifting up their heads to see if they can descry any end of their misery, they shall see thousands of Ages multiplying themselves to infinity, and there will be no remedy left, but they must sink down into an everlasting despair; neither will time or suffering at all alleviate their misery, as the Poet saith of those, who by enduring poverty make it at length more easie to be born: as our multiplyed thoughts of the happiness of Heaven, will not cloy and weary, but increase our pleasure and fruition; so will our thoughts of torment, more enrage those eternal flames which shall burn within us, and make that burning furnace glow more and more,

more, that as the duration of mens misery draws it forth *extenſively*, ſo it will alſo aggravate it *intenſively*, till it come to that extremity, beyond which there can be imagined, no degrees to which it may be further heightened.

SECT. XII.

How much Religion conduces to the good of humane Societies. And firſt, of Families, preſcribing ſuch rules to all therein, as well obſerved, would make them happy in each other.

IF *thou be wiſe, thou ſhalt be wiſe for thy ſelf*, ſaith the wiſeſt of Men. *Prov.* 9. 12. He that hath the fear of God, which is the beginning, or chief and principal of all wiſdom, doth (as is evident from what hath been ſaid already) beſt provide for himſelf, and conſult his own ſoveraign good, and indeed God hath out of his abun-

dant goodneſſe to mankind, ſo twiſted and interwoven their happineſſe with his own glory in the buſineſſe of our ſalvation, that while they beſt ſerve him, they do moſt advantage themſelves, and according as they ſeek his Glory, they promote their own happineſs; but yet we are not born for our ſelves, but as every member ſhould do its office for the common good of the whole body, ſo every Man ſhould as a member of the univerſe or community, ſtand the whole in ſome ſtead, and not be as a *Wen* or a *Wolf*, a diſeaſe or deformity only drawing away nouriſhment from the body, without doing it any ſervice, being an unprofitable burden of the earth, *living undeſired, dying unlamented.* Wherefore I will now come to conſider *Man* as a *ſociable creature*; and as he ſtands in relation to others, and ſo we ſhall find that a *good Man is a common good*, and that Religion and holineſſe doth not only make men *Tzadikim*, or *juſt* but *Chaſidim*, or *good*, for which (if for any) men will venture

ture their lives. *Rom.* 5. 7. And first, I shall consider *Men* in an *Oeconomical state*. Families being the first in order among the Societies of Men, others being made up of a conjunction, or combination of several families, as families are made up of several persons. Now in Families there is a threefold society.

The 1. *Conjugal*	between	*Husband* and *Wife*.
The 2 *Paternal*	between	*Parents* & *children*.
The 3. *Despotical*	between	*Masters* & *servants*.

Though all these not be found in every family, yet they are all found in some, and some in all. And let us but consider the Rules prescribed to all these by Christ in the Gospel, and we shall see a perfect draught of *Oeconomicks*, and the most exact pattern of an happy well governed Family. And if any professing Godliness do not come up to such rules, what I have undertaken to prove holds good in *These*, and it is not Mens Godliness, but their want of it which is to be blamed; though we may find this amongst Christians, sooner than

Plato find his *Common-wealth*, or the *Stoicks* their *perfect man*. For the *Conjugal* Society, *Husbands* are to love their *Wives* as themselves, as their own bodies; yea, as Christ loved his Church, a proof of which he gave in giving himself for it, so that he is to provide for her whatever is meet and necessary, not to be bitter against her, to be tender towards her, giving honour to her, by how much more honour God hath given to him, to instruct her in whatever is meet for her to learn of him; and in a word to forsake all others in the World, and cleave only to her, reckoning her and himself no more two but one flesh. *Wives* on the other hand are obliged to submit themselves to their Husbands, to reverence them, to obey them, diligently and frugally to manage the affairs of their Family, and to ease their Husbands as far as may be of the burden of cares that lyes on them; and to carry themselves, with that prudence, modesty, chastity, gravity, that they may be a Crown

to

to their Husbands, that the heart of their Husbands may trust safely in them, and that they may do them good, and no hurt all their dayes. So in the *Paternal* Society, *Parents* are bound to take care of the Souls of their Children, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to teach them the way wherein they should walk, while they are young, and to take care of their bodies also, providing for them, laying up portions for them, and not to use too much rigor and severity towards them, so as to discourage them, yet to give them that moderate correction, which the vanity of childhood and youth many times makes necessary. So *Children* are to obey their Parents in all things lawful, to honour and reverence them, to requite their care of them, by maintaining them (if need require) in their Old Age concealing their infirmities, and abstaining from all expressions of contempt and disrespect. In the *Despotical* Society. *Masters* are obliged to exercise hu-

manity towards their Servants, not ruling them with too much imperiousneſſe, or rigor, conſidering they have a *Maſter* themſelves likewiſe in Heaven, by whom they would not be dealt with, in ſtrictneſs and ſeverity; they are to provide for them, to give them that which is juſt for their ſervice; yea, that which is reaſonable and equal, rewarding induſtry and faithfulneſs with more than Servants can in ſtrictneſs require. So *Servants* are bound to ſubmit themſelves to their Maſters, not only in doing their work, but doing it in ſimplicity and ſingleneſſe of heart, as to God, conſidering it as a duty which they owe to God, as well as to Man, and that they muſt look for their recompence from him, ſo they muſt ſtudy to pleaſe their Maſters, not provoking by rude or croſs anſwers, not purloyning or waſting unneceſſarily their Maſters goods, not taking of their time, which is their Maſters, to ſpend in their own ſervice, or in pleaſure, or idleneſſe. Oh! how happy would

would families be, if all therein did observe these rules? We should have no complaints of the churlishnesse, or careleſſeneſs of *Husbands*, of the Prodigality and diſloyalty of *Wives*, of the harſhneſs or ſeverity of *Parents* and *Maſters*, of the unductifulneſs and unfaithfulneſſe of *Children* and *Servants*.

SECT. XIII.

How far Religion advances the happineſs of Kingdoms and Common-wealths, not only naturally, as it preſcribes the beſt Laws, and rules to all ſorts of Perſons, and keeps Men within the bounds of their duty; But morally, as it brings down bleſſings, keeps off judgements. The falſe accuſations which Chriſtians have lain under in all Ages. Julians *wicked policy.*

NOw let us proceed to conſider Man in a *Politick State*, as

part of a Kingdom or Common-Wealth: and if we would describe some *Utopia*, or set down a Model of a happy well governed, flourishing Common-Wealth; we need go no further than the Scriptures for our *maxims*, and describe the several members of it according to what the Gospel requires that they should be. I know the great ones of the World have been jealous of the Kingdom of Christ, as *Herod* was troubled, when he first heard of his Birth. I know not what occasion the abuses of some Impostors may have given to Mens prejudice and suspition, but (as I said before) that the observation of Christs precepts would prevent more diseases, than his miracles cured, so I may boldly affirm that his spiritual Kingdom, were it set up in the World, (that is, did his Laws take place, and were they duely observed) they would attract more, and be more taking than his supposed earthly Monarchy, which made multitudes run after him in the dayes of his flesh.

fleſh, *John.* 6. And it is the great honour of Religion, and an evident argument of the real worth and excellency of it, that not only thoſe whoſe corrupt affections have baffled their Judgements to believe that Religion is but a fancy, a deviſed fable, or at leaſt to wiſh and pretend it to be ſo, but the wiſeſt of ſuch men as have followed the dictates of natural reaſon, and men whom none can imagine to have been fore-ſtalled with too favourable an opinion of Religion, or to have been δεισιδαιμονεστερον, *ſuperſtitiouſly over-aw'd by a Deity*, that theſe I ſay, ſuch as *Plato*, *Plutarch*, *Tully*, *Seneca*, *Machiavel*, *Campanella*, ſhould look upon it as ſuch a good Engine for moving the huge bodies of Kingdoms and Common-Wealths; yea, a neceſſary *baſis* to found government upon, (as *Plutarch* ſheweth) without which it can no more ſubſiſt, than a Caſtle or City in the air, it ſhews clearly that there is that propoſed in Religion, which if men according to their o-

pinion can be but flattered into a belief of it will keep them in their due place and order, that every part of such a vast *Machina* may move regularly. And it is a good observation of the *Historian*, that *Rome* had the happinesse in the first founding of it, to have such Kings successively, as did by degrees take care of such things, as did most conduce to its flourishing and establishment, and that when *Romulus* had built the City, and erected a new Kingdom: *Numa Pompilius* did immediately succeed him, and establish Religion and the worship of God so far, as the light of Nature would guide him thereto. And the truth is, the belief of another life after this, and of some invisible power, superior to the power of man, is absolutely necessary for the swaying and managing those two great engines of *Hope* and *Fear*, which turn about the whole World, so that (as *Campanella* well observes) *Religione e anima della Republica e diffesa della legge naturale*, &c. *Religion*

ligion is the Soul of a Common-Wealth, and Bulwark of the Law of Nature, because the Love and Fear of God, and of eternal punishment and rewards do compel Men to the observation of the Law. What will a man care for his Life, if he apprehend that there is none after this? and there is no means to restrain men from, whatever insolencies or violences they may think necessary to the contentment of their present life, if they do not look for an after-reckoning: but they might well say, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall dye*, and rather contemn a miserable life, than omit any means for the bettering of it. *He that sets light by his own life, is Master of another mans*, saith *Seneca*. And we know the form of endictments in our own law for any crime, is, *such a one not having the fear of God before his eyes, did wickedly*, &c. commit such an act. And *Abraham* thought when he was in *Gerar* that they would not stick at any the vilest action, because as he suppo-

sed

ſed *the Fear of God was not in that place Gen.* 20. 10. "So we find "the *Atheiſt* in *Lucretius Lib.* 1. "complaining of his being over-"aw'd by the ſuſpition which he "had of an eternal puniſhment af-"ter this life; if he could have "been aſſured that there ſhould be "no life after this, or that then "there ſhould be an end of Mens "ſufferings, he could eaſily laugh "at Religion, and deſpiſe the "threatnings of their *Vates.* But, "ſeeing he knew not the nature of "the Soul, whether it was propa-"gated with the body, or infuſed, "whether it did dye with the Bo-"dy, or were caſt into the *Stygian* "Lake, he could not free himſelf "from the fears of an eternal mi-"ſery after Death. But I will come more particularly to ſhew how Religion doth contribute to the happineſſe and welfare of the Societies of Men, ſetting the boundaries of every ones Duty, preſcri-"bing to all from the higheſt to the loweſt, telling the great ones of the World, that *they which rule*

over

over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God, whose Kingdom is over all, who rules in the Kingdoms of men, and gives them to whomsoever he will, and he makes them his *Ministers, not to be terrors to good works, but to evil. To be Fathers to the poor, and to search out the cause which they know not, to break the jaws of the wicked, and pluck the spoil out of their teeth.* Inferiors are thereby likewise instructed to *submit themselves to their superiors, to give them due honour and tribute, to be Subject for Conscience sake*, which is the best foundation of disloyalty and fidelity. As *Constantius* would say, those that would not be true to God, would not be true to him. If any shall here say, *Quid verba audiam?* We have found the contrary true, and have oft seen Religion made a Cloak to palliate Sedition and Rebellion. I might answer by an *Antistrophe* retorting the objection. It seems, Religion is good in it self, because it is made use of to palliate that which is evil: Men do not counterfeit

feit ordinary ſtones, or Iron, but *Gold* and *Pearls*, as I have already upon occaſion obſerved. If Satan be transformed into an Angel of Light, what wonder if his Miniſters be ſometimes transformed into the Servants of God. I may again ſay with *Tertullian*, *Si accuſaſſe ſat eſt, quis erit innocens?* None can maintain their innocency, if upon a bare accuſation they ſhall be condemned, without a fair hearing. Not Chriſt himſelf. *John.* 19. 12. Nor his followers. *Acts* 17. 7. This odious crimination hath been uſed in ſeveral Ages, as the moſt effectual means to ſubject Chriſtians to the diſpleaſure of Princes, and to popular hatred, which they had ſome pretence for in thoſe times, when the Emperors enjoyned ſuch things by their authority as Chriſtians did juſtly ſcruple, which occaſioned that wicked policy of *Julian*, (that he might avoid the imputation of perſecution, which he ſaw was grown odious) to ſet the Heathen Idols by the Emperors ſtatues, that while they refuſed to

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give *Religious honour* to the one, they might be accuſed of denying *civil reſpect* to the other.

Let us now deſcend to conſider the aſpect that Religion hath upon fellow Citizens or Subjects, or how it conduceth to the mutual benefit and advantage of them. And firſt, let us conſider what an influence that general rule of Chriſt, *Mat.* 7. 12. would have upon all Mankind to bring back again the *Golden Age*, if when we have to do with others, we would put our ſelves into their condition, and conſider how we ſhould deſire to be dealt with in ſuch a caſe: How gently and tenderly would ſuperiors carry themſelves towards their inferiors? and with how much reſpect and obſervance would inferiors carry themſelves to their ſuperiors? the Rich would not withhold from the poor, when he had wherewith to relieve him, and ſupply his wants, but would bring upon himſelf *the bleſſing of him who is ready to periſh, and make the heart of the poor to rejoyce and ſing.* The

poor,

poor would not by his idleneſſe be unneceſſarily burdenſom to the Rich, or commit rapes upon his charity, but would labour diligently with his hands, and abate the allowance which men ordinarily give to their luſts, that ſo he might be in a capacity rather to give, than to receive. The lender would not take advantage of the neceſſity of the borrower, nor the borrower ingratefully defraud the lender; the ſeller would not deceive or over reach the buyer, nor the buyer undervalue the goods of the ſeller. Conſider further, how Chriſt more particularly requires that we ſhould be like God in goodneſſe, doing good to all, forgiving injuries, and making their condition our own, ready to be ἀντίψυχοι, for each other (as *Ignatius* oft ſpeaks) *laying down our lives for our brethren, dwelling in Love, which works no ill to her neighbor, envies not, vaunts not it ſelf, is not puffed up, behaves not it ſelf unſeemingly, ſeeks not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinks no evil, rejoyceth not in iniquity, but in*

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the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, suffers all things. If such commands of Christ were observed, Men might beat their swords into Plow-shares, their Spears into pruning hooks, there would be no leading into Captivity, no complaining in our Streets, no vexatious suits, no groaning of the oppressed, no extremity of poverty, or want to put Men upon violence, private injuries, publick sedition. If men would according to the command of Christ, obey their teachers, prove all things, hold fast that which is good, prefer others in honour before themselves, not thinking of themselves above what is meet, not being wise in their own eyes, but humbly enquire after truth, suspecting their own judgement, following after those things which make for peace and edification, studying to be quiet, letting their moderation be made known to all Men. And if those that are Teachers and Rulers in the Church would not Lord it o-

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ver the heritage of God, but be gentle towards them, as a Nurse to her Children, not seeking theirs but them, doing all things for their edifying; we should soon see an end of divisions and Schisms, and separations in the Church. If any here object that I fancy a Church of *Catharists*, and such purity and holinesse in Men, as is not to be expected in this World; I answer, I speak of what is rather to be *desired* than *hoped* for, and what religion would do towards the happinesse of Mankind, were the rules of it duely observed, and would Men be faithful to the principles of it, which is sufficient to this *Apology*, which I here make against such as would reproach it, and bring it into disgrace in the world, and to prove that the more Religion flourisheth in any Nation, the happier it is, and the better ordered, and that we may conclude with the *Tragedian*. Where *modesty, righteousnesse, holinesse, piety and faithfulnesse are neglected, that Kingdom cannot long stand*, and if any

any think this would do well indeed, if all would agree to do thus. I answer, the neglect of others doth not discharge us from our duty, we owe it to God, though Men should not deserve it, or requite it with a reciprocal care of Justice and equity. And further, it is a great advantage for raising our honour, when others neglect their duty. Sometimes singularity is the only means to get a name, as the *Satyrist* could say,

Aude aliquid brevibus gyaris aut carcere dignum
Si vis esse aliquid; probitas laudatur & alget.

There is yet another way, whereby good men do promote the *weal-publick*, and that is by the education of children, which in well governed Common-Wealths there hath alwayes been a special care taken for. Those are counted good Common-wealths-men that build and plant such things as the Common-wealth may be the better for, and enjoy the fruit of when they

they are dead and gone. But those that stock the Commonwealth with Plants of righteousness, which may in future times bring forth the fruits of Justice and equity, do more promote the publick good, and those who let go Foxes and Wolves are not more worthy of punishment, than such as bring up Children in a Common-Wealth, which through their fault and neglect of good education, are addicted to nothing but idleness and luxury, and as Midwives form and fashion the head while the bones are tender, so Parents should fashion their Childrens minds, and form their manners while they are tender and plyant, which if then neglected, do very hardly afterwards yield to Discipline *Ecclesiastical* or *Civil*. Thus far I have shewed how Godlinesse doth promote the good of a Nation in a way of *natural causality*. There is yet another way whereby it doth conduce thereto, and that is by a *moral causality*: *God delivering often the Island of the innocent*,

nocent, which is delivered by the pureneſſe of his hands. Job. 22. 30. Theſe are as the Trees in a Cawſey, which having life and ſubſtance in them, though ſometimes they caſt their leaves, do keep it from going to ruine and mouldering away, to which the Prophet is ſuppoſed to allude. *Iſa.* 6. 13. I know *Ahab* looked upon the good *Prophet* as the *troubler of Iſrael*, who indeed was as the *Chariot and Horſemen thereof* for its ſecurity and defence. And he juſtly retorted that crimination upon *Ahab* himſelf. So in the primitive times, if there were War, Earthquakes, plague, inundations, the poor Chriſtians muſt to the Lions, as if they were the cauſe of it. When *Aurelius* upon experience found that they prevailed more by their prayers for the good of the Empire, than others could by prayers and arms, ſo that he deſired the Senate to ceaſe their perſecution againſt them, leſt they ſhould turn thoſe ſpiritual weapons againſt the Empire, the effects of which he had found in ſuch

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an eminent instance, and that they might pray for the good of the Empire. As *Darius* desired that the *Jews might offer sacrifice of sweet savors unto the God of Heaven, and pray for the Life of the King, and of his Sons.* Ezra. 6. 10. Upon the same ground *Justinian* (as we may see *Constit. 6. ad Epiphanium*) took such care for the establishing of the true Religion, and for the observation of those sacred Rules which were given by the Apostles as that which would conduce much to the happiness of the Empire, and especially for the setling of a pious Ministry, by whose prayers he hoped for so great blessings upon himself and his Government. And a *wise* and *great Prince* in our own memory doth not only acknowledge that natural influence which Religion hath upon the obedience of Subjects (whereof I have a little before spoken) who himself doth best expresse his own sence of it. *It is no wonder* (saith he) *if Men not fearing God, should not honour their King. They will easily contemn*

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ſuch ſhaddows of God, who reverence not that ſupream and adorable Majeſty, in compariſon of whom all the Glory of Men and Angels is but obſcurity, but as knowing alſo how far it doth conduce morally to the happineſſe of a Nation, gives it in charge to his Son (his Majeſty now reigning in *England*) *to begin and end with God, and alwayes to keep up ſolid Piety, and thoſe fundamental truths, which mend both the hearts and lives of Men, it being not only the Glory of Princes to advance Gods Glory, but the means to make them proſperous, and keep them from being miſerable.* Whereupon his *Majeſty* as remembring ſuch pious words and counſels of His *Royal Father*, did at his firſt reſtoration expreſſe his juſt diſpleaſure againſt ſuch, as pretending a great zeal to his Cauſe and Service, did not only diſcredit it by the licence of their lives and manners; but hazard the driving away thoſe approaching mercies, which they ſhould rather have acknowledged in their ſeveral ſtations, with circumſpection

cumſpection, integrity, and reformation in their lives. It is ordinarily ſaid,

---*Delirant Reges plectuntur Achivi.*

But it is true on the other hand alſo, that Rulers are puniſhed for the ſins of the People. 1 *Sam.* 12. 25. God ordering it ſo in his wiſe and righteous Providence; not only as they partake many times in each others ſins, but as they have a joynt intereſt, ſo as one ſuffers in the ſufferings of another. I remember *Machiavel* (who was never thought to be over-preciſe, or to be troubled with a bogling conſcience) complains of it in his *Common-wealth*, as that which he feared would be the ruine of *Italy*, "that wickedneſſe did ſo much a-"bound, and that there was ſuch "a decay of Religion amongſt "them, and they were ſo far de-"generated from the purity of "the Primitive times, that they "had reaſon to expect the ven-"geance of God upon them. "Whereupon he ſhews how neceſ-"ſary it is for Princes to have a

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"ſpecial care for the preſervation "of the purity of Religion, which I am ſure is an innocent policy, and the wiſeſt *maxim* which he layes down: for beſides, that the Church hath alwayes been a *burdenſom ſtone, which hath broken in pieces all that have burdened themſelves with it*, Zach. 12. 13. Whilſt *Righteouſneſſe doth exalt a Nation*, Prov. 14. 34. *Wickedneſſe* (like the talent of lead in the *Ephah*, *Zach.* 5. 8.) *ſinks* it down. We know ten righteous perſons would have ſaved a *Sodom*, and God would do nothing againſt it, whilſt there was one in it. And if God did not for the ſake of ſuch, many times ſpare Nations, and ſhew them ſome peculiar favour, there had been no ground for that which he himſelf hath pronounced of them, that they are ſuch, *of whom the World is not worthy.*

SECT. XIV.

An enquiry into the causes, why Religion is so much neglected. The remoter causes the corruption of Mans nature, the malice and power of the Devil, the nearer cause, the prevalency of Sence against Faith and reason, which is removed by shewing in how many instances of our Lives, we do by reason correct the errors of Sense.

HE that shall read what I have hitherto written, and observe the general practice of the World, will perhaps wonder, that if these things be so, Men should no better understand their own interest, but generally neglect this which is pretended to conduce so much to the making of the World happy, & what I have said, though it may

may ſeem to ſome to have ſome ſhew of probability, will hardly obtain belief, but lye under ſome ſuſpition, like the honeſt projects of ſome well-wiſher to the publick good, which never obtained ſo much credit as to be reduced to tryal. Wherefore I ſhall a little enquire after the cauſes of that ungodlineſſe and prophaneneſſe, that ſo generally reigns in the World. And firſt, we know the Scripture hath oft taught us that the nature of Man is ſo corrupted by that which is called *Original Sin*, *That the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually, his heart deſperately wicked and deceitful above all things*; his underſtanding ſo darkened that he is *alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him: filled withall unrighteouſneſs: fleſhly luſts, warring againſt the Soul, and prevailing in our members to bring forth fruit unto Death. The Wiſdom of the fleſh is enmity againſt God, ſo that* man is *wiſe to do evil, but he hath no knowledge to do*

good. Now experience doth more confirm us in the belief of this, than a thousand Arguments. Again, we oft read of the enmity of the Devil against Mankind, and though his power be not much discerned by many, yet it is like the influence of Cœlestial Bodies (Sun Moon and Stars) upon these sublunary things, powerful and effectual, though not discerned but in the effects: hence we read of his *working effectually in the hearts of the Children of disobedience: of men being taken captive of him at his pleasure: of the strength of deluſion: of his going about like a roaring Lion: of wrestling with principalities and powers: and resisting the Devil stedfast in the Faith.* He that should have seen the Poor Man cured by Christ, offering violence to himself, and casting himself sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water, would have easily concluded that he was acted by some evil spirit to such things as were destructive to his own nature: so to see men sin against their own souls,

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and run ſuch deſperate hazards againſt their own intereſt, is a clear argument that they are acted by ſome other nature, which ſeeks their ruine and deſtruction. Now theſe may be remote cauſes of the prevalency of that *Atheiſm*, which we ſee and lament in the World, but yet there muſt be ſome nearer cauſes ſearched out; for (unleſſe it be in ſome ſecret *Sympathies* and *Antipathies*) *Man* doth ordinarily act according to reaſon, that is, what is either really ſo, or ſeems ſo to him, and there muſt be ſome *ratio motiva* to elicite, or draw forth the acts of his will. The Grace of God is powerful in good actions, yet it works congruouſly to our natures, moving by the means of ſome rational arguments and principles: ſo the efficacy of the Devil is very great in evil actions; yet he makes uſe for the moſt part of *moral arguments*, though he had ſuch a hand in *Judas*, his Treaſon, and *Annanias* his coſenage, as that he is ſaid *to put theſe things into their hearts*, yet, by the whole tenor of

their ſtory, we find that there were ſome moral motives he made uſe of, and that it was covetouſneſs that did more, immediately ſway in theſe ſins. Now (it ſeems) one main reaſon of Mens *Atheiſm*, which is more near and immediate, is the *prevalency of ſenſe*, as there are ſome actions, which do prevent the reaſonings of the mind, which we call *actiones hominis*, but not *humanæ*, which indeed are *actions of Men*, but not *humane actions*, proceeding from the eſſential principle of man, objects coming to the ſenſe, before they can have acceſs to the underſtanding; the ſpirits move diſorderly till the underſtanding taking cognizance of the matter, do rectifie ſuch motions of the ſpirits: as in a ſudden noiſe or unexpected ſight, the ſenſes as the *Centinels* take the firſt alarm; but as ſoon as the news is carryed to the underſtanding, as the main guard or principal officer, and found to be of no dangerous conſequence, this ſudden commotion is allayed: ſo in more im-

important passages of our lives, sense makes many disorderly sallies and motions, without taking counsel of the understanding, and objects do make very deep impressions upon them; and the Scripture doth take notice how much we are led by sense in this frail state, wherein we are so as we may all say with the Prophet, *Lam.* 3. 51. *Our eye affects our heart*, this is the foundation of the Apostles argument, 1 *John* 4.20. *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* We have a thousand times more reason to love God, than to love our Brother, considering the perfections and excellencies that are in God, to render him amiable, and the obligations which we are under, to him who hath done more ten thousand times for us than all the friends which we have in the World; but whatever reason there may be in the thing it self, the Apostle argues according to our poor capacity, & the access that things have to us,

and doth clearly ſuppoſe that things which have acceſſe to our ſenſes, are more effectual for moving our affections, than ſuch things as are only the object of faith. So though we hear of an infinite Majeſty that created and ſuſtains our ſelves, and all other finite beings, who ſeeth all our actions, and will one day call us to an account for them; and likewiſe of an eternal weight of glory, made up of things, which *eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor ever entred into the heart of Man to conceive*: theſe things do not move us, becauſe they are far out of our ſight, and the things of the World which are nearer to our ſenſes, and are the immediate objects of them, pleaſing the *taſt*, delighting the *ſmell*, tickling and flattering the *Ear*, dazling the *eyes*, have more prevalency upon us.

But yet, upon examination we ſhall find this is not ſufficient to prevail againſt thoſe important conſiderations, which I have already

ready propoſed, nor to leave mankind excuſable for abandoning himſelf to the pleaſures of this life, ſo as to neglect thoſe better things which are propounded as the reward of holineſs. Let us but quit our ſelves like men, and exerciſe thoſe common principles of reaſon, which we exerciſe in other affairs of our lives, and though we cannot perhaps thereby ſilence the clamors of ſence, yet we may confute them, and reject them. Do we not ordinarily ſee men correct the errors of ſenſe by reaſon? Do we not ſee them part with their blood, to prevent the inconveniency of a diſeaſe? which for the moſt part they do believe or ſuſpect, not upon the evident demonſtrations (but probable conjectures), of a Phyſician, or at beſt by their own reaſon. Do not men endure the cutting off of a member to ſave the body, and lengthen out a miſerable life for ſome days or years? Do not men drink the moſt unpleaſing potions for the recovery of their health, or repairing their decayed

ſtrength? Do not men caſt their ſeed into the earth, in hopes of receiving the increaſe of it? Doth not the Merchant ſend away his goods, in hope to receive others for them, which may bring him ſome gain and advantage? And what is all this, to denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts? denying our ſelves the pleaſure of ſin, for the pleaſure of Heaven? yea, do we not ſee men ordinarily binding their Sons to ſome Apprenticeſhip, for many years, that ſo they may learn a Trade to maintain themſelves in ſome repute in the world, when they ſhall come to years? rather than let them live in idleneſſe and pleaſure, giving up themſelves to childiſh ſports and vanities, when they are young, which would afterwards expoſe them to poverty and contempt. And he is accounted a cruel and unjuſt Father; that will not thus love his Child, with ſuch a prudent ſeverity, rather than undo him by a fooliſh indulgence: yet, how wide a difference is there in theſe caſes?

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And how far doth this fall short of expreſſing the unreaſonableneſs of ſuch as will rather enjoy preſent pleaſures, than prepare for future happineſſe? A Child is bound to an Apprenticeſhip, and he perhaps dies before his time be out, and ſo all his labour and charge is loſt, or he doth not live ſeven years a Freeman after he hath lived ſeven years in a hard ſervice. But he that gives up himſelf to the ſervice of Chriſt, let it be imagined to be as hard as ſome mens prejudice perſwades them, the ſooner he dyes, the ſooner his ſervice is ended, and though he dye never ſo ſoon, he loſeth not his Freedom, but is made a Citizen of Heaven, and once entred there, he never dyes but doth for ever reap the fruit of his labours. Do we not give twenty times as much for the *Fee-ſimple* (as they ſpeak) of an Eſtate as it will bring us in one year? and according to the ſame rule, were we ſure to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin twenty years, and could imagine them to be equal to

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the joyes of Heaven, yet we ſhould quit them for thoſe everlaſting pleaſures, which we ſhould enjoy for ever *our ſelves*; and not only for ſome Ages, as we hope to do Eſtates on Earth, not in our *ſelves*, but only in our *poſterity*. Further yet, we ſee it is in *vain to lay a ſnare in the ſight of any Bird. Prov.* 1. 17. they will not come into the Net to feed, if they perceive it, or ſwallow the bait, when they ſee the hook: yet fooliſh men do venture on Hell, which they are told will certainly be the wages of ſin, and will enjoy the preſent pleaſures of it, though they have all the aſſurance that a man can have of any thing which he ſees not with his eyes, that it will coſt him his life, and that his Soul muſt rue for ever in Hell. God indeed doth not manifeſt himſelf to us ordinarily here, nor take us up as he did *Paul* into the third Heavens, to ſhew us the Glory thereof, but he will have us to exerciſe faith here, and to take his word, which he hath ſo fully confirmed to us, that we may as

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certainly trust to it, as if we had the clearest evidence in the world. The Husband-man casts his seed into the ground without any fear or suspition of losing, having been confirmed by many experiments in the hope of receiving it again with increase; but a thousand experiments will not so fully perswade, as a divine testimony confirmed by Covenants, Oaths and Seals, (the ordinary wayes of confirmation amongst men) so that a Divine faith, founded upon the word of God, is as *the substance of things hoped for*, which are but future, and makes them as it were really subsist, and is *the evidence of things not seen*, confirming them to us, and as fully perswading us of them, though they are not obvious to the sense, as any Philosophical demonstration can confirm any truth, so that notwithstanding the Apostle owns sence to be a great means to move affections in this frail state wherein we are, yet faith serves believers for a sufficient foundation of love and de-

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light, *Though they see not Jesus Christ, they love him, and rejoyce in him with joy unspeakable and full of Glory.* 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. We are short sighted, and *cannot see a far off.* 2 *Pet.* 1. 9. but faith as a *perspective* brings things nearer to us, that we may judge of them as really present. Let not our *senses* therefore usurp authority over *Faith* and *Reason*, but let Faith and Reason have their perfect work, let not the *Men of the World be wiser in their Generation than Children of light*, let us not be wiser in the things of the World, than in the things of Heaven. We chuse not the fairest of things, (for the most part) but such as are more serviceable and durable, nor the sweetest, but that which is wholsom and nourishing, we chuse not the cleanest or pleasantest way, but that which leads to the place which we are going to. So let us judge of things, not according as they present themselves to our senses, but as they have a real intrinsick worth to commend themselves

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to our judgments, and let us not judge of things according to their ſuitableneſſe to our preſent fancies, but as they conduce to our abiding good, meaſuring every thing not by *Time*, but by *Eternity*.

SECT. XV.

Inconſiderateneſſe, another great cauſe of Atheiſm, againſt which the beſt remedies are a ſerious apprehenſion of the great moment, and importance of ſpiritual things, frequent reading and hearing the word of God, Chriſtian communion and conference about matters of Religion, mutual admonition. The prevalency of evil cuſtoms and habits, the folly of deferring repentance.

ANother chief reaſon of that Atheiſm, which abounds ſo much

much in the World is, *inconsideratenesse*, the most important truths do not affect us any longer than we consider them. The *Platonists* observed this who made *knowledge* nothing but *remembrance*, or an actual consideration of that which Man knows, not reckoning that to be knowledge which lyes dead in the *habit*, and doth not at all affect the Soul. And we find that the Scripture layes much weight upon this *consideration* or remembrance, yea, as much as Mans salvation comes to. We may observe, *Isa.* 1.3. There is an *Epimone*, wherein the Prophet layes the sin of *Israel* upon this, that they did not *consider*. So 1 *Kings* 8. 47. We may observe affliction brings men to bethink themselves, that brings them to repentance, and repentance is a means to obtain pardon; and we find by experience, that when Men are by sickneſſe brought to a serious weighing of matters, they are easily perswaded to make good promises and resolutions, which when their minds are afterwards

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(by the pleaſures of the World) diverted from the thoughts of, they turn to their former courſe; yea, we ſee many times that Men are ſo ingenuous as to yield to reproofs, and to condemn themſelves and their own wayes, when they are admoniſhed of them, as if they ſtood in need of no more, but to be put in mind of ſuch things as they have in their own hearts, and only to have conſcience awakened, and we find *Ezek.* 18. 14. 28. that the turning away of a wicked man, from the evil of his wayes, depends chiefly upon *conſideration.* I have already ſhewed that the Devil is the remote cauſe of that wickedneſſe and prophaneneſs, which abounds in the World; yet, he uſeth this as the great means to draw Men from God, to divert their minds from the thoughts of ſuch things, as may have an influence upon *their* affections and actions to make a change in them, as we ſee plainly in the *Parable* of the *Sower.* Luk. 8. 12. *Men hear the word, then comes the Devil and*

and takes it away out of their hearts, left they ſhould believe and be ſaved. Firſt, we find by experience that Men are oft ſeriouſly affected with thoſe things, that they hear while they are lively repreſented to their minds, and preſſed ſeriouſly upon their conſciences, preſently we obſerve that their thoughts are quite taken off from thoſe things, and (like water which hath been warmed) they return to their old temper again. We ſee here Chriſt himſelf aſſigns the cauſe of it, it is the Devil that doth this, where it is ſuppoſed that he hath power to do it, though we are not ſo eaſily able to underſtand how he doth it, unleſſe it be by propounding other objects to us. We ſee here his deſign in it diſcovered, which is to hinder their *believing*, and conſequently their *Salvation*, which we find by ſad experience to be the woful conſequent of this his malice. Now the moſt effectual remedy againſt this *inconſiderateneſſe*, would be a ſerious apprehenſion of the great moment and concernment

ment of these things. It is the means which *Moses* prescribes to the *Israelites*, *Deut.* 32. 47. for setting their hearts to those things, which he testified to them. *It is not a vain thing for you* (saith he) *it is your life, and by those things you shall prolong your dayes.* It is a rule of Prudence which prevails throughout, that *we should look to the main chance*, and not neglect the important affairs of our life. The Husbandman forgets many petty businesses, but he never forgets to Plow and sow. He would be accounted a mad man that should go to the Market and buy trifles and toyes for his children, and forget to buy them bread. A Traytor will not forget to sue out his pardon, or a Man that hath a suit for his whole Estate, forget to produce his evidences, and prepare his answer against the *Term.* This is our case, we are condemned already in law, *John* 3. 18. that is in force against us, we know not how soon we shall be fetched to execution. If a Man did but apprehend the danger he is in

in continually, while he is a wicked man, and in an unregenerate condition, ſtanding continually upon the pits brink, and ready to fall in, it would ſurely awake him out of his ſecurity, and prevent his ſleep, till he ſhould have ſome hope of his pardon, or the thoughts of the infinite advantage that true *Godlineſs* brings with it, would make him continually apply his heart to it. *The abundance of the Rich, ſuffers him not to ſleep*; by reaſon of his care and ſolicitude for the keeping of it, and we have more cauſe a thouſand times to be ſollicitous in this caſe, *leſt a promiſe and* poſſibility *being left us of entring into ſuch a reſt, we ſhould by any means fall ſhort of it.* The ordinances of the Goſpel, the reading of the Word, the Communion of the Saints are preſcribed by God, as a further remedy of this evil. *Heb.*3.13. Daily mutual exhortation is commended as a means to prevent the hardening of our hearts through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, which the more it is indulged, the more

more it insinuates, and prevails upon us. Mens knowledge makes not the Word of God less useful to them; therefore it is a vain ignorant thing for Men to neglect it, upon pretence of knowing as much as their Teachers: though the Saints to whom *Peter* writes, were instructed and established in the truth, yet he thinks it necessary to write those things to them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. *to put them in remembrance, and thereby to stir up their pure minds.* Cap. 3. 1. *The words of the wise being not only as nails to fasten,* that Christians may be established, *but as goads* to excite, that so they may not grow negligent, *Eccl.* 12. 11. and the work of Ministers lies more in awakening the conscience, and quickening the affections, than informing the Judgement, and there are few men that live where the sound of the Gospel comes, but know, that which duely improved, would make a considerable change in their lives, and I think it might be of singular use in a Christian life, for those that have near

near Relations (if ſuch as are prudent and faithful)or thoſe that have friends which are to them as their own Souls, if they live together, and have opportunity to know well each others converſation, ſeriouſly to oblige themſelves to each other, if they obſerve any thing in each others lives, or carriages which is unbecoming their profeſſion, to take the firſt opportunity (with all Chriſtian meekneſs and privacy) to tell them of it, how they ſpake ſuch a thing unadviſedly, did this thing unſeemly, exceeded in the other thing. I know it is a duty of zeal and charity, which all Chriſtians owe to each other, but thoſe have the beſt opportunity for it, who have daily intimate converſation with others, and advantage for obſerving the whole procedure of their lives. And this which I have now been ſpeaking of doth likewiſe make that gracious Chriſtian communication, which the Goſpel requires more neceſſary. And for this cauſe God did not only require

quire it of the Jews, but further enjoyns them the use of their *Phylacteries*, and the writing, the most important Periods of the Law, upon their Gates and Posts, that so the things which did so nearly concern them, might be continually sounding in their ears, and represented before their eyes. I might assign further, some other causes and cures of mens Atheism and wickedness, as the corruption of mans nature doth strongly incline a man to evil, so Regeneration is that which doth change their natures, and dispose them to holiness; but there are many acts of morality, which conduce to Mens present advantage, (both in a personal and a relative capacity) to which regeneration is not absolutely necessary, and I have already spoken something of it, Sect. 7. therefore I shall say no more of it in this place. Concerning the prævalency of evil habits, and customs, and the prejudice that doth thereby arise against holiness, as also concerning the advantage

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that one who is a Christian indeed, (and hath experience of spiritual comforts, and the sweetness of the duties of Religion) hath above one that is only outwardly a Christian, and doth duties only as a task, I have elsewhere spoken somewhat also, and so supersede from any further consideration of them. I confess, I think the putting off, and procrastinating of repentance, detains many in the snares of Satan: but the former part of my discourse doth wholly militate against this folly of men, and deprive them of all such pretence in that, (besides the imprudence and extream madness of putting off that which we know not whether we shall ever have opportunity for, and leaving a matter of such importance, as our eternal Salvation at uncertainties) the advantages which Men have by observing the precepts of the Gospel, even in this life, do require our most speedy applying our selves to the observance of them, and argue the deferring of our repentance of

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the greateſt folly, and all that have been brought thereto, (eſpecially in their old age) have been ready with *Auſtin* to complain, that *they have known God too late*, & repented that they did no ſooner exchange the pleaſures of ſin, for the joy and peace which is in believing.

SECT. XVI.

Objections, from differences in Religion anſwered, though we could not be fully aſſured that the Chriſtian Religion is true, yet it would be our wiſdom to obſerve the Rules and Precepts of it. The proofs which ſome have of the truth of Chriſtian Religion, clearer than thoſe which ſome deſire to have, & clearer than any produced for the truth of any other Religion. Objections from the improbability and ſeeming contradiction of many things in Scripture anſwered. Notwithſtanding the difference amongſt Chriſtians, all of them are agreed, in ſo much as may ſerve for the well ordering of our converſations.

THere are ſome yet that (being willing to find any pre-

tence for palliating their sin) will ask how we shall find out the *true Religion*, amidst so many differences as there are amongst men about it. When we see men agreed and come to some accord, about matters of Religion we will consider of the whole businesse. Now to such I answer, that if their doubt be concerning the *Christian Religion*, whether that be the only true amongst those which are professed in the *world*. First, the esteem which it hath obtained in the World, and the reverence wherewith it hath been received in all places, to which the knowledge of it hath come, may challenge from any wise man the most serious weighing of what is offered for the proof of it, which I will not here stand to sum up, but will only say, (and that with much confidence) that whosoever shall but seriously peruse what hath been written in several Ages, for evincing the truth of it, will (see at least) so much probability for the truth of it, and so much reasonablenesse and equity in the precepts of it, that they will account it mad-

madneſſe in any to run the hazard of loſing that reward, which it propounds, or ſuffering the puniſhment which it threatens to the deſpiſers of it, rather than ſubmit to a *Law* ſo *holy*, ſo *juſt*, ſo *good*. Let us ſuppoſe it, many prove falſe, yet, what would Men loſe thereby? indeed they would loſe their future reward, but they would have the preſent advantage of it, for (as *Chryſoſtom* truly ſays, Δυσκολώτερον ἡ κακία Scil. τῆς ἀρετῆς. *The way of ſin is more difficult than the way of holineſſe.* And I cannot but here ſubjoyn the ſaying of a Learned Man, on *Mat.* 11. 29. *Precepta Chriſti, talia ſunt ut ſi par ponatur conſuetudo unius hominis ad rectè vivendum, alterius ad flagitia, non dubie multo dulcior ſit futura vitæ quæ ſecundum virtutem eſt, graviſſimæ enim tributa pendunt qui ambitioni, qui avaritiæ, qui libidini ſerviunt*: that is, "Suppoſe ſeveral Men e-"qually accuſtomed to a ſinful, "and a Holy life, and the way of "Vertue and Piety ſhall be found "to be much more pleaſant, and

"those that are Vassals to ambi-
"tion, Covetousness, sensuality
"will find the tribute heavy,
"which they pay to such Tyrants.
So that as those who search into the secrets of nature to find out the *Philosophers Stone*, though they attain not their end, yet find out many secrets and experiments, which may be pleasing and useful: in like manner, those who seek eternal happiness in the Gospel, though it should be supposed that they may miss of it, yet they shall find such real advantage by the observation of those precepts, that are there given, that their labour would not be in vain, but they would be sufficiently recompenced for it. But now suppose, the things therein delivered, should prove true, what a woful case would those be in, which should be found to be neglecters of it? what a dreadful thing would it be for them to *fall into the hands of the living God*? and you that think good to suspend your belief of the truth of the Gospel, that so you may without

disturbance enjoy the pleasures of sin, and prevent the clamors of an unquiet accusing Conscience. Gird up your loyns like Men, and tell me, (I beseech you) do the arguments which you have against the truth of *Christian Religion*, as far exceed in probability, those which are alledged for the proof of it, as the Glory which it propounds (as the reward of holinesse) exceeds the pleasures of sin, (supposing that pleasure in it which you imagine) or as far as the torments threatned, as the wages of sin exceed the utmost severity that men can be imagined to submit themselves to, in obedience to the Gospel? yea, let men but act congruously, and allow as much in matters of Religion, as in other instances of their lives, and we shall find that, as the Christians of old argued against the Heathens, that they believed many things in Philosophy, and humane learning, upon lesse evidence than what was offered for the proof of Christianity: so men do make much greater

adventures upon more improbable grounds than any they can be imagined to make by conforming themselves to the Rules of the Gospel, upon the grounds laid down for confirmation of it. And if men were as suspicious and wary in other things as these *Scepticks*; in matters of Religion, they must not eat, lest through the malice or negligence of some, there should be poyson mingled with their meat; they must not go into an house, lest it should fall upon their heads; they must not obey any commands of their Princes, unless they should come and deliver them in expresse words to themselves, because some might possibly counterfeit their hands and seals; yea, it is most evident, that they must forbear so many things, that they would not be fit for converse with men, but would quite overthrow human Society. Let me go a little further, I desire (in good earnest) to know of Men, what evidence they require to perswade them of the truth,

truth of Christian Religion, and it may be what they have already will be found more convincing. Some may fancy a voice from Heaven would satisfie them. I answer, they have already a *more sure word of Prophecy*. 2 *Pet*. 1. 19. They think perhaps if one should come from the other World, of their former acquaintance, and tell them what is done there, they should believe; but he that doth not believe the Scriptures, *will not believe though one should arise from the dead*. Luk. 16. 31. Neither do I beg the question, in alledging these things from Scripture, grounding them wholly on its authority, but assert them boldly as *theorems*, which are demonstrable by reason, being assured that there might be more objected against such kind of evidence, than is to be objected against that which is brought in the Scriptures. For tell me, I beseech you, in case there should be such a voice from Heaven, might we not as easily suspect that our senses might be de-

ceived, or that it might be formed in the air by some spirit, as suspect that we should be imposed upon, by the Prophets who wrought so many miracles, for the confirmation of their mission from God, which so plainly fore-told many things to be accomplished after many Ages, which could not be foreseen in their causes, that were holy men, and such as could not be imagined to have a design to deceive, especially the *things* which they delivered, being such as exposed them to danger and trouble and were not likely to bring them any advantage in the World. Or should *Moses*, or one of the Prophets, or Apostles arise from the dead & tell us, they did indeed live here upon the earth in such times, and preach such Doctrine, and work such miracles; yea, and they have found since their Death, that those things which they Prophecyed, or Preached, are true, they see those who obeyed their word triumphing in Heaven, and those who contemned it, tormented

ed in Hell: might we not as eaſily ſuſpect that this might be ſome Spirit, which appeared in their ſhape to delude us, as that the *Jews* who are Enemies to the *Chriſtian Religion*, ſhould deviſe a writing and diſperſe it abroad in the World, which ſhould ſo plainly confirm the *Chriſtian Religion* as the *Old Teſtament* doth, which is at this day owned among the *Jews*, or that thoſe Antient Writers ſhould conſpire together, to deceive the World, in recording the ſame things, which we find in Scripture, or that the Scriptures ſhould be tranſlated into ſo many languages, and diſperſed all the World over, ſo ſoon after the Apoſtles times, and none be ſo falſe to the divulgers of it, or ſo true to the World, as to give notice of it, if it were a forgery, or that theſe things ſhould be recorded in the *Roman Regiſters*, and the acts of their Senate to which *Tertullian* durſt appeal, if there had been no ſuch thing? This one thing would I learn, ſhould one come to us, as

from the dead in the likeneſſe of *Alexander*, *Cæſar*, *William* the Conqueror, *Wickliff*, *Luther*, *Calvin*, and tell us in ſober ſadneſſe that they were ſuch a one, that lived in ſuch a time, did ſuch things, Preached ſuch Doctrine, whether ſhould we believe ſuch a Teſtimony ſooner than the unanimous conſent of *Hiſtory* concerning them, and thoſe Books and Writings which are generally received as the works of ſuch Men? If any ſhall ſay that *Turks* and *Heathens* are as confident of the truth of that Religion which they were brought up in, as we are of the truth of ours. I anſwer, they have not like ground for their confidence, as for the *Heathens*, what became of their *Gods*, their *Oracles*, when the *Hebrew Child* was born, and when the Goſpel began to ſpread in the World? Compare the miracles wherewith other Religions have been confirmed, with thoſe wherewith the Goſpel hath been confirmed, and ſee whether they be ſo many, ſo con-

confeſſedly above the power of Nature or Art, ſo evidently wrought in the ſight of all, as thoſe whereby the *Chriſtian Religion* hath been confirmed. What is the reaſon that the *Turks* admit no enquiry, or diſpute about matters of Religion, but require an implicite Faith? *Truth ſeeks no corners, error ſhuns the light.* Examine the Laws of *Turks* and *Pagans* whether there be that *Purity, Equity, Wiſdom, conſonancy to right reaſon,* and the *light* of *Nature,* in them which is to be found in the Scriptures. Examine the ways and means by which they have been propagated, whether they have reached any further than their Swords have made way for them, whether the *Weapons of their warfare were ſpiritual or carnal*: whereas the Goſpel prevailed through the evidence and power of the Spirit againſt the pretended authority of the *Jews,* the Wiſdom and learning of the *Grecians,* the power and force of the *Romans,* and Fiſhermen were

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too hard for *Rabbies*, *Philosophers*, *Judges*, *Generals*, *Armies*. If any object the improbability of some things delivered in Scripture, I shall only propound whether there be not some things which we are fully assured of, either by *experiments*, or *Mathematical demonstration*, which to others seem as improbable as any thing in the Scripture seems to us, and shall we not grant God to be as much wiser than our selves, as we are wiser than other Men, and suppose he could as easily convince us of those things which now seem impossible to us, as we can convince others of those things which they cannot at present believe? And if the seeming contradictions that are in Scripture be urged to weaken the authority of them, they are rather an argument of the integrity and sincerity of the Penmen, and their leaving things so securely, which do not at first sight seem to accord with other Scriptures, shews clearly they had no Plot to deceive the World, otherwise they would

would have conſpired to make their teſtimonies, agree in words more exactly; yet upon examination of the matter, and conſidering the ſeveral circumſtances of time, place, Perſons, ſcope, occaſion, the ſeveral uſes of the ſame word and phraſe, the latitude which all Authors uſe in their writings, the ſeveral places and Perſons of the ſame name, the ſeveral names given to the ſame place or Perſon, the ſhortneſſe of Scripture, Hiſtory, and ſupplying in one place, what is wanting in another, the attending rather to ſence and ſubſtance, than to words and phraſes in citing Scripture, we ſhall find that there is a very fair accord between thoſe places which ſeem to be at the greateſt variance, and if we cannot reconcile all places, yet if we conſider that we have by attending to ſuch things as I have mentioned already, compoſed ſo many ſeeming differences, we may conclude it is from our own ignorance, that we cannot compoſe the reſt, and that there

there is yet somewhat else that we are ignorant of, which if we could find out, we might as easily reconcile the rest, which at present seem most irreconcilable, and it is obvious to every one how many difficulties and contradictions seem to be in every Science, while Men are but smatterers in it, which presently vanish as soon as they come more perfectly to understand it. But now if this objection be framed against the differences which are among Christians, which professe the Gospel, I will by the way observe this, that differences do most abound, where men (upon serious apprehensions of the weight and importance of the matters of faith) do diligently apply themselves to understand themselves, the mysteries of the Gospel, and to see with their own eyes, being affraid to be deceived in matters of such moment, by depending upon the testimony of others, and unwilling to lose their Souls and Heaven, and God, to save the labour of searching after truth,

truth, and in those Nations where I have had opportunity to be conversant, I have found most differences amongst them, which have been most addicted to Religion, and most sollicitous about the condition of their souls, and most agreement amongst them, which have contented themselves to follow others by an implicit faith, without troubling themselves much to search after truth, and where there hath been such a coldnesse and indifferency in matters of Religion, that all have quietly accorded together, as the *Philosophers* observe, that cold doth congregate *Heterogeneal* things, or such things as are of different kinds, making them all to consist quietly together, which heat doth sever and seperate. So that I am almost ready to say with *Luther*, that *I know not how to believe, that the Gospel hath been preached in a place, where I do not see errors and divisions.* And it is further observable as an argument of the general concurrence

currence of all Christians, in the belief of the necessity, and excellency of an holy life, that setting aside some few, who (being themselves Slaves to vile affections) have laid down some loose principles to patronize their own corrupt practises, and draw after them such as are laden with the like sinful lusts: men of all opinions and perswasions have earnestly pressed men to the greatest strictnesse and accurateness in their conversations, and have served themselves at least of a shew of holinesse, as the most effectual means to induce men to a belief of their Doctrine. But to come nearer to the matter, let us leave men to suspend their belief a while of those things, which they see controverted, and where they find probable arguments alledged on the one side, and on the other, yet their objection holds not against such things, wherein all are agreed, as are most of the precepts of the Gospel. That rule which was formerly mentioned, given by

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our Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 12. is not only allowed by all *Christians*, but by the very *Heathens*. *Alexander Severus* did so much esteem it, that he would have it written upon the Walls of his Palace. So many other important truths, which are a sufficient Foundation, of the most strict and holy conversation are agreed on amongst all, as Gods *omniscience* overseeing all our actions, a *future judgement*, wherein all must be sentenced according to their actions, insomuch that even Robbers, and such as conspire in wickedness, and seem to bid defiance to Heaven, are self condemned, and witness for God against themselves, in obliging themselves to secresie and faithfulness to each other, by solemn oaths wherein they swear by the name of that God, whose commands they live in the open breach of, and so acknowledge him as a witness and spectator of their actions, and one who will severely punish the contempt of his authority, in the breach of such oaths.

Many

Many cannot agree indeed about methodizing their notions, and disposing them into such a *system* as that every part may agree, and that there may be an harmony in the whole. Some cannot agree about the *order and nature of Gods decrees*, yet all believe that no decree doth excuse a Mans sin, or that any can pretend any benefit by their election, that have not some evidence of it in their sanctification. Men differ in their notions about the *cause of sin*, yet on both sides they hold; that as the kind of fruit is not according to the root or stock, but according to the Graft or Cyon, out of which it immediately grows: so the specification of actions depends not upon any remote causes which may have an influence into them, but upon the will of him that is the immediate cause of them, and that there is nothing in the decrees of God, or the temptations of Satan, which will excuse the sinner, or quit him from guilt. Men are at variance about the *extent of the efficacy*

ficacy of Christs death, but agree that none shall have any saving benefit by it, but those that believe. Men differ about the *Power of nature*, and *liberty of the will*, but on both hands, own so much power as will leave men inexcusable, and may be a ground of our endeavors, and so much necessity of Grace and Divine assistance, as may bring us upon our knees, and force us to our Prayers. Some difference there is about *Perseverance*, but a consent in this, that he that doth not persevere in holiness shall never be saved. Some difference there is about the *hand that works have in our justification*, but all agree that they are necessary in those that are justified. Men vary in their opinions about *the obligation of the Law, the nature of the Covenant of Grace, Christian liberty*, &c. but in this they consent, that the things required in the Law are necessary to be done, though not perfectly, yet sincerely as we can: that the Covenant of Grace is not so far absolute, that men may be

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saved without faith and holiness: that Christians are not to abuse their liberty, as an occasion to licenciousness. *Now happy is he that condemns not himself in the things which he alloweth.* In short, let us pray as if all depended wholly on Gods grace, without our endeavors. Do *good works*, as if we were to be justified by them. Trust to Gods Grace, and mercy in Christ, as if we had done no works at all. *Live* as if there were no *Gospel. Hope* as if there were no *Law.* (I speak not in respect of the lowness and servileness of our principles, but in respect of the diligence of our endeavours) Let us walk watchfully and cautiously, as if we feared falling away; yet love God, and hope in him, as if we were certain to persevere. In short, (if I may take liberty to mention such names) let us *pray* like *Calvinists*, *endeavour* like *Arminians*, *act* like *Legalists*, *hope* like *Antinomians*; be *Papists* in our *works*, *Protestants* in our *Faith.* Let me again add, to prevent mistake and offence, I speak not of the principles

ciples of Mens actions, but the matter and ſubſtance of them: nor of what they do in *Hypotheſi*, which come under ſuch diſtinguiſhing names, but, of what ſuch Mens principles do really (or at leaſt are ſuppoſed by others to) lead them to. Finally, *whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame things.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 6. line 8. read *Isa.* 6. l. 11. *Phil.* 3. 19. *p.* 34. *l.* 25. for God *read* Gold, *p.* 37. *l.* 6. *r. Col.* 3. 23. *p.* 51. *l.* 15. blot out *Mankind*, *l.* 28. blot out *yet*, *p.* 53 *l.* 15. for them *r.* him, *p.* 58. *l.* 10. *r.* out of joyne, *p.* 129. *l.* 15. *r.* δειπνοσοφισται, *p.* 145. *l.* 9. *r. Zech.* 12. 3. There are some small faults in the pointing, but such as will not much trouble any Reader.